

ART IN

PROVINCIAL FRANCE.

J. COMYNS CARR.

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PROVINCIAL FRANCE.

LETTERS WRITTEN, DURING THE SUMMER OF 1882,

TO THE *MANCHESTER GUARDIAN*,

BY

J. COMYNS CARR.

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## INTRODUCTION.

Towards the end of July I was invited by the editor of the *Manchester Guardian* to visit some of the principal museums of provincial France. At a time when the subject of art administration was attracting renewed attention at home, and when the Corporation of Manchester was itself preparing to undertake the charge of an art gallery, it was felt that some better knowledge than was commonly possessed of the art institutions of the great cities of France could not fail to be useful and suggestive. The museums and schools of art, scattered in such numbers throughout the departments, are the fruit of an organisation that has no counterpart in our own country, and for this reason alone they seemed to deserve closer study than they had hitherto received. That these museums have attracted but little notice from English visitors

is not indeed surprising. The towns in which they may be seen to the best advantage do not come within the ordinary compass of a Continental tour, and even in places which lie upon the beaten track of foreign travel, the museum rarely arrests the attention of the visitor, who is perhaps rightly more eager to examine the older monuments of art than to concern himself with modern institutions of artistic culture.

In reprinting the following letters, which record the impressions of my journey, I am very sensible of their shortcomings both of matter and method. Within the time at my disposal it was impossible to attempt an exhaustive survey of the museums of France, nor was it always easy in a single article to do justice to some of the larger and more varied collections. Moreover, in treating of the organisation, as well as of the contents, of the different museums, it was sometimes difficult to arrange the material I had collected in a logical and orderly fashion. As I passed from city to city the general system out of which these institutions have grown up revealed itself under new and shifting aspects. Arrangements that worked well enough in one town seemed to produce under different conditions of local management results that tended to modify the first impression, and just as often it would be found that the energy and enterprise of the citizens themselves had served to exhibit in a more favourable

light some element in the general scheme of organisation that had elsewhere proved comparatively ineffective.

And yet although the measure of prosperity achieved in every case must be held to depend upon the intelligence and earnestness displayed by the municipality, it would be a mistake to ignore the advantages which the inhabitants of these great provincial cities have derived from the existence during a long period of a settled tradition of administrative procedure. Since the beginning of the century the museums of the provinces have had a recognised status. Their relations towards the central government on the one hand and towards the municipality on the other have been defined with sufficient clearness to render their establishment in any particular instance a matter which involved no disputable principle and but little practical difficulty. Certain general conceptions of organisation and control are common to them all, and have supplied a framework which, as the occasion offered, each city has been able to adapt to its own requirements. And this is a point that deserves attention, for it represents the general acceptance of certain ideas of municipal responsibility which are not yet acknowledged in our own country. Long before the decree of the First Consul had affirmed the right of the great provincial centres to a share in the enjoyment of the national art treasures the promotion of artistic

culture was recognised as one of the functions of municipal government. Nor can it be doubted that the acceptance of this principle has proved of immense service to the cause of art. Leaving out of sight for the moment the influence it has exercised in the formation of public collections of art, it is impossible not to be struck by the advantages enjoyed by the inhabitants of French towns in the existence of a widespread system of art education. The schools of the provinces in which a regular course of instruction is gratuitously supplied were in the first instance the fruit of local effort depending upon local support. State intervention in this matter has come as an afterthought, and even now the amount of material assistance rendered by the State is small enough in comparison with the large annual outlay made by the towns themselves. But it is no part of my present purpose to treat at length of the art schools of France. If I refer to the circumstances of their origin, or to the means of their support, it is mainly in order to emphasise the fact that since the subject has attracted serious notice in France there has never been any hesitation in the public mind as to the propriety of using the machinery and resources of local government in advancing the interests of art.

And to this liberal conception of municipal duty is also due the successful development of the provincial museums of France. The decree of Napoleon

authorising the distribution of upwards of a thousand pictures among the great towns of the departments would not have achieved the object with which it was made unless the different municipalities had been prepared to second the initiative of the State. In some instances the nucleus of a public collection of works of art already existed, and nowhere was there any uncertainty as to the expediency of corporate action. The museum passed at once into the category of public institutions. Its recognised connection with the city was established once and for all, and has never since seemed open to argument or dispute. And this explains in a great degree not merely the success of these institutions, but their number. In a city of any pretensions the museum comes as a matter of course with other municipal developments. It is created without difficulty, for the simple reason that its establishment has long been counted among the recognised aims of local enterprise, and because the principles which determine its organisation and control form an integral part of the machinery of municipal government. The influence which this settled conception of public duty has exercised in advancing the cause of artistic culture can scarcely be exaggerated. There exist in France at the present time more than a hundred museums, claiming an official connection with the towns in which they are situated. It is true that in many instances they fall far short of

the public requirements, and in some cases are wholly unworthy of their dignified title. But even where failure is most conspicuous, and where for lack of enterprise the museum is little more than a name, its establishment nevertheless serves to assert a principle which in England is still struggling for acceptance. Nor at the worst is this barren result the only advantage derived from the system. In nearly every town of France the process of modern improvement is constantly dislodging from their ancient settlements objects of historical association or of genuine artistic interest, and for such things the museums provide an appropriate receptacle. Fragments of architectural ornament and decoration and characteristic examples of furniture which but for the museum would be lost altogether or swept away into private collections are thus preserved to the citizens as a permanent record of local art and history. In like manner also the museum serves as the storehouse for the fruits of local archæological research, and to the long existence of such institutions must be ascribed the extraordinary worth of many of the provincial collections of Gallo-Roman remains. And there is yet a further benefit which provincial France has derived from the enlightened policy that has been in force since the beginning of the century. The presence of the museum, though it may not have inspired the enterprise of the citizens themselves, has often served to attract the muni-

ficence of private collectors, and the artistic treasure acquired in this way, and which is now permanently secured for public enjoyment, is certainly of extraordinary extent and value. The local patriotism of a single collector has sometimes most effectively supplemented, and sometimes entirely replaced, the efforts of the municipality, nor can it be doubted that the existence in every considerable city of a recognised channel for such liberality has been a powerful factor in promoting its exercise.

But these museums of provincial France are not merely municipal. From the circumstances of their origin they also enjoy the advantages of State assistance and control. As I have pointed out in the course of my letters, the action of the central authorities in the matter of inspection and control is now the subject of a considerable amount of criticism. It is felt, and with justice, that the care of the valuable works of ancient art deposited in these museums has been left too long to the discretion of individual curators, and it is undeniable that this neglect and indifference on the part of the Government has in some cases resulted in serious damage. But the merits of a system are not to be measured by the apathy of those who are entrusted with the duty of carrying it into effect. The energetic efforts that are now being made in France to repair the acknowledged defects in the present mode of organisation would afford sufficient proof if such were needed that the principle which con-

nects the museums of the great cities of the departments with the central machinery of government is deemed essential to the progress and development of art. And it is this principle, as we must remember, that still needs to be enforced among ourselves. The right of the large centres of industry to a share in the enjoyment of the national art treasures has hitherto been urged with but little effect. What has been accomplished in this direction is due rather to the earnest goodwill of those who have charge of the national collections than to the initiative of the Government. The authorities at South Kensington are permitted to circulate objects of art throughout the country, and within the last two years a small vote has been added to the estimates for the production of casts and copies of original works of value. But as yet no organized demand has been made by the representatives of the great towns for an annual grant to be devoted to the purchase of works of art for the local museums, and until such a demand has been preferred and admitted we cannot be said even to have accepted the principle which has so long prevailed in France.

Nor is it likely that any real progress will be made in the matter until there exists in England some recognised authority to whom the representatives of the great towns can make their appeal. With no accredited representatives in the councils

of the nation art lies at the mercy of the Treasury, and sometimes of the Treasury clerk. Even the national institutions of art whose claims upon the public purse are acknowledged have to struggle against a dogged resistance on the part of the Government whenever any effort is made to secure a special grant of money, or when the moment has arrived to establish a permanent title to a more liberal subsidy. The great spending departments of the country have their spokesmen in the Cabinet charged with the duty of defending their interests and of justifying every item of expenditure deemed necessary to efficiency; but the cause of art, both in and out of Parliament, has to depend upon amateur championship, which struggles ineffectually against the simple *non possumus* of those who hold the national purse-strings. And so it happens that unless the claims of the national institutions of art are made the subject of organised agitation even the most reasonable measures of development or reform are deliberately neglected and delayed. There is no need to quote instances of the evil results which are attributable to this clumsy and incoherent system. The lamentable lack of enterprise and initiative in all matters connected with the public patronage of art is too well known and too widely acknowledged. But I may point to the recent loss of the manuscripts belonging to the Duke of Hamilton as affording conclusive evidence that under existing conditions we cannot hope to com-

pete with the representatives of foreign Governments in their efforts to advance the cause of artistic culture. While we have been laboriously striving to set our cumbersome machinery in motion Germany has quietly appropriated the whole of this magnificent collection, and our own museums are left out in the cold.

And if our present system has dwarfed the development of the national collections, it has, at the same time, proved equally hostile to the establishment of any comprehensive scheme for the encouragement of art in the great provincial towns. Even if the claim put forward on their behalf were recognised by Parliament, it could only be effectively satisfied by means of an organisation which does not at present exist. Until such an organisation has been created the legitimate aspirations of the great centres of industry will be apt to take a form that is calculated rather to excite opposition than to win encouragement and sympathy. For it must be confessed that the demands of those who espouse the cause of the provincial museums have sometimes assumed extravagant proportions. The idea that the contents of the British Museum or the National Gallery are to be scattered broadcast over the country is obviously untenable. These central depositories of art must always remain as the prime objects of national liberality, and to rob them of any essential part of their resources would be a signal blunder which students in all parts of

the country would soon find reason to deplore. In this particular, therefore, the process which had enriched the French museums is not applicable to our own case. The National Gallery is of only recent creation; the treasures it possesses do no more than suffice for the illustration of the different phases of ancient and modern art. It is not, like the Louvre, the heir of a vast inheritance of artistic treasure, and therefore it cannot, like the Louvre endow other institutions and yet retain uninjured its own supremacy. But in this inability of the central museum to satisfy the needs of the provinces is to be found, I think, the strongest reason for asserting the principle which has so long been recognised in France. There the State gives both in money and in kind; and in money, at least, we need not show ourselves unable to compete with our neighbours. Nor does it follow because the British Museum and the National Gallery have now but little to offer that they will as a matter of course be always in the same plight. The resources of both institutions are constantly increasing by purchase and bequest, and it would be strange indeed if in progress of time the accumulation of treasure did not yield a proportion of work that might be appropriately distributed among the museums of the country. Even now the British Museum could render effective aid in this way. It is notorious that in the Print Room are stored a large number of duplicate impressions of valuable engravings,

many of which would form a welcome feature in the art gallery of a city like Manchester.

But there is another advantage which would surely follow from the acceptance of the principle upon which I have been insisting. If the claims of the provincial museums were admitted, the purchase of works of art out of the national funds could be effected upon terms that are now wholly impossible. The authorities in Bloomsbury and Trafalgar Square cannot afford to buy what they do not need for the purposes of their own institutions, and thus it often happens that a single work in a large and varied collection is acquired at a figure which is out of all proportion to the value of the whole. Under an organised system of art administration this would not occur, for the remainder of the collection could always be utilised to advantage even if it were not required for the central museum. The duty of effecting purchases of works of arts would be entrusted to a properly constituted body representing the interests of art in the provinces as well as in London. The recommendations of such a body could not readily be ignored. They would carry weight with the public and with the Government, for they would command the support of expert opinion in every department. But the accomplishment of a reform like this cannot be brought about without a radical change in our present system. In order to awaken such a measure of public interest

in the cause of art as would react upon the Government it is indispensable that our forces should be united and combined. It is indispensable, I mean, that the great institutions devoted to the service of art which are now under the control of separate and independent bodies of trustees should consent to be placed in some sort of harmonious relation to a central authority, and that such an authority should also have in its keeping the interests of the local art centres throughout the country. Until we resolutely set ourselves to the accomplishment of this preliminary labour it is vain to hope for any efficient aid from Government, however great may be the desire of the guardians of the national collections to do what lies in their power towards the encouragement of local museums. With the forces of art scattered and divided either political party can safely ignore their existence, but once establish an intelligent union between the metropolis and the provinces in this matter and the interests of both will be permanently secured.

With regard to the form that should be given to the museums of the provinces, there is one conclusion which a survey of the existing institutions of France would seem to establish beyond dispute. No museum can be held to deserve the support of the government, or to warrant the intervention of municipal authority, which does not accept the largest and most liberal interpretation of its functions. If the cause of art is to be served by such

establishments, it must be by showing in what way the spirit of art can be made to enter into the life of the people, and by marking the enduring relation which exists between art and industry. In this way alone can the museum justify its existence. There is sometimes a danger, as I have taken occasion to point out in the course of these letters, of sinking the museum in the picture gallery and of thus dwarfing the conception of art to suit a merely popular taste. But this is not an expedient that could recommend itself to a public body anxious to promote the serious study of art. The picture gallery has its legitimate place in the scheme of the museum, but it represents only one of many varied forms in which the artistic spirit expresses itself, and the taste to which it appeals stands least in need of encouragement.

# ART IN PROVINCIAL FRANCE,

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## I.—O R L E A N S .

The great cities whose walls are washed by the impetuous and shifting waters of the Loire are rich in monuments of art and in the records of history. From Orleans to Nantes the river runs through a fruitful country that was once the chosen seat of kings, and of kings who pressed into their service the most accomplished and gifted artists of their time. Blois, Chambord, Amboise, Chenonceau, Loches, and Dampière have each in turn some dark or brilliant page in the troubled life of the past enshrined within their walls, and to all in like manner there belongs the happier and more lasting association that is given by the magic of art. The workmen who laboured to carve in stone the royal emblems of their employers could scarcely have looked forward to a time when the thought and care so lavishly bestowed upon their task would outlive the glory which such things were designed to perpetuate. We are apt to think of art as a

product which of necessity shares all the human frailties of its epoch, and in a larger view of the intellectual movement of the world this cannot but be true. And yet it is no less true that the art of the past often escapes the stain of history, serving to remind us by its survival that in these seasons of dark crime and fiery ambition there was a happier life even for those who dwelt within the shadow of a court. For it is impossible to believe that the artists whose excellent invention and delightful skill are shown in the delicate ornament of such a building as the old Hotel de Ville at Orleans can have cared for much else besides their work. "*Ces messieurs n'étaient pas plus bêtes que nous*" was the pregnant remark of my driver, as I stood examining the exquisite carving upon the capitals of the pilasters that flank the doorway in the Rue Sainte Catherine, and this no doubt is a truth worth constant remembrance. With a reticence and brevity that verged closely upon epigram, my companion had recalled the standard by which such art should be judged. We are all of us rather apt perhaps in estimating the great achievements of the past to spend too much time in wonder and too little in respect. Our breasts swell with the proud consciousness of the steam engine and the electric telegraph, and from the heights of a superior civilisation we condescend to be surprised at the skill of earlier and less fortunate ages. Whereas in a juster view of the matter there is indeed no room for

wonder at all. Rather it would be wonderful, one might say, if, after such long and patient seeking for beauty in Italy and the North, the artists of France who caught the spirit of the Renaissance before Gothic tradition was dead had failed to leave behind them some achievement of peculiar character and fascination. But although their work was doubtless wrought with greater ease than we can guess, and with an exuberance and freedom of invention never perhaps to be granted again to the artists of any future age, yet in virtue of these very qualities it must have served as the all-absorbing occupation of a lifetime. Theirs certainly was not the existence that is mirrored for us in the story of royal intrigue and crime; and in their art we have the best assurance that for those who were not within the immediate influence of princely ambition there were seasons of tranquil study and quiet labour.

This ancient Hotel de Ville is now the home of the Orleans Museum of Painting and Sculpture. It was originally constructed for a rich bourgeois of Orleans, and the façade of which I have spoken was the work of the architect Viart, and dates from the early years of the 16th century. The present Conservator of the Museum, in his preface to an excellent catalogue of the collection, puts forward a plea for the restoration of the building. The word has come to stink in the nostrils of all who care for art, and the movement which it represents

has already made havoc along the banks of the Loire. Let us hope that the picturesque Hotel de Ville at Orleans will be left a little longer in its unregenerate state. Certainly before the modern artist is allowed to tamper with the façade, castings should be taken of some of the more delicate designs in relief. It is only lately that the French Government has shown a just appreciation of the value of the architectural remains of the Renaissance which are scattered through the country, and the work of reproduction which is now being undertaken is due in a great measure to the intelligent initiative of the late M. Viollet-le-Duc, who started the project of a historical museum of sculpture to be opened in the Trocadero Palace. But no collection of casts, however complete, can save for us the beauty of an old building, and even if the Hotel de Ville should escape unharmed such is not likely to be the fate of the house that once belonged to Agnes Sorel, and which has lately been purchased by the municipality. Thither in due season it is proposed to remove the collection now installed in the Rue Sainte Catherine, and a sum of 40,000 francs has already been promised by the Government towards the work of restoration. This is an earlier and in some respects even more interesting specimen of French domestic architecture than the old Hotel de Ville. But, in truth, the streets of Orleans are richly furnished with monuments of art, and its

citizens might perhaps have been forgiven if they had rested satisfied with their historical inheritance, as furnishing in itself sufficient material for study and instruction. In common, however, with all the important provincial towns of France, Orleans has its school of art, its museum, and its public library. These are the standing institutions of every considerable city of the Republic, and the machinery which determines their organisation dates in many instances from the days of the Consulate. Between the years 1803 and 1805 22 provincial museums were created, and amongst them were distributed a certain number of works of art, drawn from the Royal collection, or acquired by conquest from different parts of Europe. The museum of Orleans has a more recent origin. It was established by the municipal council in the year 1823, when the task of its formation was entrusted to the Comte de Bizemont, by whom it was enriched with an important collection of pictures. At a later date the museum made further acquisitions from M. Piltet-Grenet, who had purchased the Chateau de Richelieu, and who was thus enabled to contribute several very interesting examples of the early French school. Besides its pictures and engravings the museum already possessed some valuable specimens of decorative art, and to this section was added, in 1855, the archæological collection belonging to the department, and the treasures accumulated by the Archæological Society of the town.

This led to the separate establishment of the Historical Museum, which in the year 1862 was transferred to the beautiful building known as the house of Diane de Poitiers, a delightful example of the art of the French Renaissance attributed to Androuet du Cerceau.

Orleans thus possesses at the present day two distinct collections of art, both fortunately located in houses that are in themselves admirable samples of artistic design. As regards the character of the works with which they are furnished, there is nothing to denote a special purpose in their formation. They are in no way connected with the industrial manufactures of the town, and save for the presence of certain memorials of Jeanne d'Arc their contents have only a general artistic interest. This, at least, may be said of the Museum of Paintings; for the historical collection, which includes an admirable series of Gallo-Roman remains as well as a number of decorative objects of value, has so far a local significance that the various items have for the most part been found in the department. The importance of such a gallery of paintings as Orleans possesses must not, however, be underrated. To its existence during a long series of years must be ascribed the fact that we have here presented for public study and general enjoyment works which have in many instances an important bearing on the history of art, and which would otherwise have passed out of knowledge into the hands of private individuals.

The service rendered by these provincial museums in supplementing the resources of the national collections is by no means trifling. An analysis of the catalogue shows that since the date of its formation no less than 387 works have been presented to the municipality, without counting gifts made from time to time by the Central Government. Amongst this number are four very curious pictures by Deruet,—a painter of the early years of the 17th century, who but for these interesting examples of his art would scarcely be known at all,—and a series of historical portraits of considerable value and importance. Another function which such a museum as that of Orleans discharges is that of encouraging the struggling ambition of local artistic talent. Every school of art in the provinces sends in due course certain of its more promising pupils to receive a higher course of instruction in Paris, and those who ultimately acquire fame are not left without honour in their native town. The municipality takes care to possess itself of some specimen of the artist's work which finds its way into the museum of the town, or where it is a sculptor whose talent calls for recognition his energies are still further employed in the adornment of the public places of the city. The career of the gifted young sculptor Roguet is a case in point. He lies buried in the cemetery of St. Vincent at Orleans, the town in which his first artistic efforts had been made, and in the museum

is contained a display of his work which serves to keep his memory fresh in the hearts of his fellow-citizens. It was the dying request of Roguet that his statue of the Republic should be given to Orleans, and the State generously carried his last wishes into effect.

## II.—BLOIS.

The Museum of Blois is of comparatively recent origin. It dates only from the year 1850, and its interest to the visitor, and even to the citizens of Blois, is overshadowed by the attractions of the building in which it is placed. It is not therefore to be taken as a type of the French provincial museum, but for this very reason it is worth a little notice as showing how widely spread and how firmly established is the political organisation by which these municipal institutions are nourished in France. I do not mean to say that the arrangements are in all cases ideal, or that the framework is not in some instances out of proportion to the result. Frenchmen themselves are not, indeed, very enthusiastic over the present condition of their museums. The past year was a period of renewed activity in regard to all matters connected with art education in France, and the museums of the provinces came in for a full share of scrutiny and criticism. It is felt, and perhaps with justice, that local effort has not been sufficiently encouraged,

and that enough has not been done by the State to circulate works of art throughout the departments. Added to this there is a further impression that the municipalities themselves have in many instances neglected their duties in regard to the museums under their control—a feeling which has taken practical form in a circular addressed by the Minister of Arts to the various prefects throughout the country asking for a report upon the state of the museums in their several departments. It is not our present concern to follow the course of this inquiry. Every country does well to keep a keen eye upon the merits of other institutions and the defects of its own, and the belief that we are rapidly gaining upon them in certain forms of artistic manufacture will doubtless urge the French people to greater activity and enterprise. From the English point of view, however, it is more instructive to examine the system as it stands. Its essential characteristics will not be touched by any of the proposed reforms, and although the success of South Kensington has a little fluttered the French spirit we need not blind our eyes to the patent fact that we possess as yet no organisation such as that which has produced the museums of provincial France. And with the museums must also be classed the schools of art and the public libraries. Every French city of consequence possesses all of these establishments, and in a large number of instances there exists

besides a historical and archaeological museum, which generally includes some interesting remains of antiquity as well as local records of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It sometimes happens that this historical section is under the same control and in the same building as the museum of paintings. Such, in fact, is the case with Blois. But in most of the larger towns it has been found convenient to separate the gallery of pictures and sculpture from the historical collection, and to constitute two distinct establishments with a separate director for each. As this separation has nearly always come as the natural result of experiment, it is worthy of remark as showing that the growth and development of both departments are more readily fostered where they are kept apart.

The Museum of Blois, therefore, although of recent growth, may be said to represent the primitive type of the French provincial museum. It is at the present time one and undivided, and its control is in the hands of M. Ulysse Besnard, a gentleman whose intelligent interest in the Museum has not hindered him from perfecting the manufacture of a very beautiful species of artistic ware known as the "faïence de Blois." The general appearance of the city would scarcely lead the stranger to suspect the existence of any museum at all. In common with the other great towns of the Loire, it has successfully declared its prosperity by knocking many of its old houses to pieces and substituting

handsome and imposing buildings in the approved Parisian style. But these innovations are not obtrusively thrust in view of the spectator, and from a distance at least Blois yields an impression of tranquillity and repose, as though under the watchful shadow of its castle it had been lulled to sleep by the swift movement of the stream. And in truth, when all is said, it is not to be compared either in size or busy importance with such places as Orleans, Tours, Angers, or Nantes. But this sleepy city, which still retains in many of its streets some delightful specimens of the domestic architecture of the past, has been so far alive to its municipal duties as to have brought together for the enjoyment of its citizens some three hundred pictures, besides numerous drawings and engravings, and the various objects included in the historical section. The greater number of these pictures are, it is true, of modern date, and many of them are not of the highest educational value. But they are fair specimens of the contemporary school of France, such as a Blesois unable to make his way to Paris would naturally be glad to see. A municipal museum is, after all, not merely an affair of education, and there are in Blois as elsewhere many worthy citizens whom a well-executed picture of modern sentiment will more readily attract than an authentic and priceless masterpiece of a past age. Moreover, it is, as we must remem-

ber, a part of the theory of these provincial museums that they should keep pace with the age, and, as I have already explained in the case of Orleans, one of their special functions is to honour the successful achievements of native artists. Here, for instance, we find an admirable relief in plaster of a mother and child by Daniel Dupuis, an artist of Blois, while among the works of an earlier time having something of a kindred interest must be ranked a series of portraits in terra-cotta by Nini, an artist who sojourned in the neighbouring chateau of Chaumont. I have not sought to rate the collection of the Blois Museum too highly; it can, indeed, lay no claim to exceptional interest or importance. It is rather to be reckoned as a normal product of the system out of which it has grown into existence; but, on the other hand, it is not to be thought that the scant references already made to individual items in the catalogue conveys a fair impression of its resources. Still in the range of modern art are to be noticed characteristic examples of Ary Scheffer, Ingres, and other painters of a past generation. Historically the collection has been greatly enriched during the past year by a donation of upwards of sixty pictures, including a valuable series of portraits, many of them highly interesting in their bearing upon the history of the chateau itself. This series, the acquisition of which is due in great measure to the devotion and energy of the director, serves to sup-

plement the resources previously in the possession of the Museum. One of the curiosities of old French art which belong to Blois is a remarkable woodcut of the time of Francis I. supposed to be unique, and there is also a quaint picture of manners representing a *fête* at the Court of Henri III. A genuine Clouet, a spirited head of Ronsard, and portraits of Marie de Medicis, Louis XIII., and Charles Martin are among other interesting specimens of the early French school.

In the architectural and archæological section of the Museum the director has accomplished a work deserving of all praise, and which should be followed as an example elsewhere. It is unfortunately not possible to speak of any of these cities of the Loire without recurring again and again to the vexed question of restoration. It is imminent, as we have seen, at Orleans; it is already in full swing at Blois. The interior of this magnificent building was entirely restored in 1845 by M. Duban, "with excellent taste," as the guide-books say, and seeing that the whole fabric had been previously allowed to fall into ruin some such work was perhaps necessary, or at least inevitable. The exterior, hitherto almost untouched, is now undergoing a similar process. The Commission on Historical Monuments has approved the plans, and the work is rapidly progressing under the care of M. de Baudot. That, however careful and reverent the architect may be, some things must occur which

lovers of art will regret, our own experience proves only too clearly, and we may therefore be thankful to the curator of the Museum for having secured casts of some of the most interesting passages of decorative sculpture before they were touched by the restorer's improving hand. There is some talk, as I learned, of entirely reconstructing one portion of the façade looking on to the court, in order to bring it into accord with the beautiful work of the time of Francis I. But there is really no excuse for a design of this sort in the case of a castle like Blois. One of its main sources of artistic interest lies in the panorama of historic styles which in its different parts it now presents to the spectator. As a complete embodiment of a single architectural idea Blois cannot rank either with Chambord or with Chenonceau, although it contains passages of finer workmanship than either of them can boast. It is, in truth, a richly-furnished museum of architectural science during the successive epochs to which it belongs. Especially instructive is the illustration it offers of the ease and ingenuity with which the builders of the Renaissance imposed the newly-acquired features of Classic style upon Gothic tradition. Between the eastern façade, erected on the east side of the court during the reign of Louis XII., and the more imposing structure of Francis I. there is no sense of violent conflict or opposition, although in essential principle and method the two examples are absolutely distinct. There is scarcely

a moulding which could be transferred from one side of the court to the other without producing discord in the result, and yet even in the earlier portion classic sentiment is already intruding itself, showing its influence in the graceful treatment of the surfaces of the columns and in the increasing emphasis given to the lateral lines of the structure. In the later façade, on the contrary, where every structural and organic feature has confessedly a classical origin, the ornamentation is so free and picturesque, there is so much liberty everywhere for the unrestrained assertion of the architect's individuality, that the result scarcely appeals to the eye as a work of classical design. To realise the undefinable charm of this architecture of the French Renaissance we have only to compare with it again the still later façade erected from the designs of Mansard, where classic sentiment has become rigid without securing any semblance of antique severity. These three wings of the castle are typical in their juxtaposition. Nothing can exceed the wealth and ingenuity of invention in ornament which the builders of the time of Francis I. brought to their task. The splendid staircase rising in a succession of open galleries to the full height of the roof is wrought with the sumptuous elaboration that a jeweller might bestow in the setting of a precious stone, and yet its richness does not weary the sense, for it leaves no suspicion of weariness on the part of the workmen.

## III.—TOURS.

The Museum of Tours is one of the most ancient institutions of the kind existing in France. The first national movement in favour of establishing such collections dates from the year 1798, and was due to the initiative of Heurteaut Laneauville, who urged the claims of the great provincial towns in the Council of the Five Hundred. This motion took effect two years later when, upon the report of the Minister Chaptal, a law was passed according an official status to a large number of provincial museums. Tours, strange to say, does not figure in this first list, but it was fortunate enough, nevertheless, to come in for its full share of the artistic treasure which between the years 1803 and 1806 was divided among the principal cities of France. Whatever may now be thought of the policy of thus scattering valuable works of ancient art over the country—a policy be it observed which could scarcely have its counterpart in a country whose national collections were less richly endowed than those of France—it undoubtedly had the effect of giving a powerful stimulus to local enterprise and organisation. The example of liberality set by the Government has in many instances been followed by private donations of extraordinary interest and value. But on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that here and there the cities themselves had already given sufficient

evidence of their interest in artistic culture to encourage and justify the benevolent action of the central authority. Tours may be cited as a case in point; for, long before the movement to which I have referred, it had conceived the idea of a municipal museum in connection with a local school of art. The moving spirit in the matter was a certain M. Rougeot, by whom such a school had been founded in the year 1760, and to whose intelligent efforts, seconded by those of his son-in-law and heir, M. Raverot, is due the formation of the present museum. The works of various kinds which they were enabled to save from the wreck of the Revolution, and which had been carefully collected from the neighbouring castles and monasteries, were at first deposited in the cloisters of St. Martin. In 1793 they were removed to the Archiepiscopal Palace, and finally, having in the meantime been again transported to the building since occupied by the Prefecture, the collection found an abiding home in a handsome structure designed for its reception in the year 1825. Here, doubtless, it will remain, and at the present moment an adjoining site is being utilised for a new school of art. Up to now the School and the Museum have occupied the same building, under the undivided control of M. Laurent. But the classes begin to overflow the limited accommodation assigned to them. Moreover, it is thought that it will prove more convenient to separate the special classes designed

for the practical instruction of artisans from those which are devoted to the general course of art teaching. Not that any social distinction is observed in the organisation of the school. All the public classes are held in the evening, between the hours of seven and nine, and are available without charge to all who may present themselves for instruction. But apart from the general curriculum there is a special course of study for those who wish to perfect themselves in the principles of a particular craft; and as the making of models by intending masons and carpenters involves a certain amount of disturbance to students otherwise employed, it has been decided that when the new building is finished this practical section shall be kept apart, and be continued in the present classrooms.

It may be worth while to state briefly what is the nature and scope of the instruction gratuitously offered to the citizens of Tours. Of course it is comparatively easy to multiply classes and professors in the prospectus of an art school without producing any significant result; and I may therefore begin by saying that the director kindly gave me an opportunity of inspecting the drawings of the students from the antique and from life. These drawings seemed to me in some essential respects to be superior to the average contributions from the schools in connection with South Kensington. They were very much less finished in

the manner of execution, and, therefore, perhaps less attractive to the fond relatives and friends of the student. But this very absence of elaborate finish implies, I think, the existence of a better system. With masses of light and shade sharply defined and simply disposed, there is no room for incompetence to hide itself. The work must be mainly right, or it will leave its blunders openly confessed; whereas a highly stippled chalk drawing may be so worked as to confuse essential qualities of tone or draughtsmanship with mere aimless and insignificant detail. I do not mean that the expert professor will be deceived by such laboured incompetence, but the pupil perhaps deceives himself in the process and loses power to distinguish between the true and the false in his work—a result much more important and deplorable. Well, the drawings I examined at Tours were certainly free from these defects. Their execution had no pretension either of “masterly,” slightness or of searching knowledge. It was restrained within such limits as might fairly be assumed to correspond with the pupil’s limited command of his subject, and was thus eminently fitted to its purpose. It must be understood, of course, that such a school as this at Tours does not undertake to supply the world with a race of accomplished painters and sculptors. Its efforts are more definitely directed to furnishing such a knowledge of art as shall be applicable to the various forms of skilled industry. When a student

manifests decided promise for a career of pure art, he is sent at the expense of the city to the Ecole des Beaux Arts at Paris. But, although its aim is strictly limited and defined, the course of instruction supplied by the school is ample and comprehensive. Those who are responsible for its conduct do not commit the blunder of supposing that the secrets of decorative art can be acquired without some acquaintance with the higher problems of draughtsmanship and design—problems which cannot be solved, cannot even be rightly apprehended, without some methodical study of the human figure. The living model poses once a fortnight for the public classes. And there are besides in every week special classes for anatomy and architecture. The school possesses a fair collection of casts from the antique and a few specimens of Renaissance ornament. Its resources in the latter kind will ere long be greatly strengthened by the action of the Government, which is busy in taking moulds from the more important monuments of French architecture and decoration, the casts from which will be distributed gratuitously among provincial art schools.

But it is time to leave the Art Schools, which occupy the ground floor of the building, and to make our way to the handsome galleries overhead, where the pictures and works of sculpture are tastefully arranged. The general artistic level of the paintings in the Tours Museum must be

accounted exceptionally high. It is fortunate in the possession of three or four pictures of the very first importance, such as any national gallery might be proud to claim, and it presents besides a full and instructive record of the growth and progress of the French school. Chief among the gems of the collection are the two exquisitely finished panels by Andrea Mantegna, which once formed part of the predella of the altar piece painted for the Church of San Zenone at Verona. It seems a strange fate that these delightful examples of the great Paduan painter's genius should have been carried off from their appropriate place in Italy to find a permanent home in a French provincial town. They are part of the rich gift that Tours received from the State in the year 1806, and, although perhaps they will be less seen and enjoyed than if they had remained in Verona, we must be thankful that they have been preserved at all, and in such admirable condition. Those who are familiar with the work to which they belong will be prepared for the delicate beauty of the workmanship bestowed upon them. The first of the two, representing Christ in the Garden of Olives, is cut and finished like a jewel. The quality of patient and minute elaboration that belongs to it makes one marvel that a genius so austere, who could when so minded stamp his invention upon the few abstract lines of an engraving, could also at will pass to the opposite limit of method and expression, and spend his whole strength in the affectionate

study of every minute detail of the scene, and yet without sacrifice of simplicity, and with no loss of dignity in the result. Every building in the distant view of the city is drawn and defined with the precision of portraiture, and in the troop of little figures that descend the winding road each individual form has its appropriate gesture and character. The general composition of the central group resembles the picture of the same subject by Bellini in the National Gallery, but the foreground is infinitely richer in fulness of design. I may note especially the varied growth of weed and fruit and flowers, from the bulrushes that overhang the little rivulet to the left to the bunches of grapes pendant from the bare boughs of a stricken tree in the centre of the picture, and the irises that grow beside the rock at the feet of Christ. As an example of the delicacy of finish everywhere employed upon the painting, it may be observed that the bees that swarm around the mouth of the hive set in the midst of the garden are picked out in pure gold. The companion design represents the Resurrection, and while marked by the same qualities of delicate manipulation, it is interesting besides for the characteristic strength of the invention. This is not at all such a version of the subject as is familiar to us in the paintings or designs of Giovanni Santi, Perugino, and Raphael. It has a touch of rougher realism in the gestures and bearing of the terrified

soldiers—a suggestion of that direct reference to simple nature which serves to connect the art of Mantegna with that of Durer and the North. Between these two pictures hangs a large and grandiose composition by Rubens, representing Mars crowned by Victory, remarkable especially for a splendid passage of colour in the painting of a confused mass of different pieces of armour. Here, too, is Boucher in perfection, represented by three spirited works from the Chateau of Chanteloup, and on the same wall is a fine Guercino, full and deep in colour, and of higher sentiment than is common with the painter. Here and there throughout the different rooms are to be found other examples of the Italian schools, including a little angel of the Annunciation by some unknown artist of Sienna, and a Holy Family by one of the school of Perugino. In this brief review I have, of course, only chosen the more remarkable of the earlier works. There is much else worthy of notice, and there are, besides, many French pictures of historical as well as artistic interest. I may add by way of postscript that M. Laurent has promised to have the Mantegnas photographed without delay.

#### IV.—ANGERS.

The day I arrived at Angers the town presented an appearance of unwonted animation. The principal hotels were full to overflowing, and during the afternoon and evening carriages poured into

the city bearing a number of well-dressed visitors from the country lying round about. The occasion of this unwonted movement was the appearance for "one night only" of Madame Sarah Bernhardt. As I watched the crowd pressing into the doors of the handsome new theatre I was reminded of the statue of the great actor Talma, by David, of Angers, which I had just seen in the museum, and I wondered how many of these his fellow-countrymen in their eager admiration of the reigning favourite had any thought left for the great artist of a past generation. There is always a certain pathos in this constant process of oblivion, and yet it is in the nature of things inevitable. The art of our own day speaks to the world with a familiar and persuasive accent such as even the highest authority of an earlier time cannot hope to command; and though this is a truth to which the fleeting triumphs of the theatre would seem to give a keener emphasis, in the main it holds good of the other arts as well. Leaving the theatre I took a stroll through some of the principal streets of Angers, and at every turn there seemed to come some fresh illustration of the same well-worn theme. Groups of the townsfolk who had not been fortunate enough to secure places for the play were gazing with admiration at the handsome new buildings that are rapidly transforming the appearance of this prosperous city. The old houses of the 15th and 16th centuries, with gabled roof and richly-carved timber

framing, are everywhere making way for imposing stone structures in the latest fashion of Parisian architecture, and it is the new and not the old, as one may see, that strikes the popular imagination with wonder and respect. The town is still richly furnished with the quaint and picturesque structures of the past, but it is easy to perceive that the ideal of its citizens is to thrust them as much as possible into the background in order to make room for the more ambitious efforts of the modern architect. Nor could it well be otherwise with a growing and prosperous community such as this. Art of some kind every generation will have of its own—bad art if it cannot get good,—but whether bad or good such art will always exercise a more direct and powerful influence in the life of a people than the most precious treasure saved from the wreck of the past. No collection of ancient masterpieces, however richly endowed, can take the place of the artistic product, however poor it may be, which expresses the living spirit of its own time.

At the first blush this thought might seem discouraging to the modern enthusiasm for public galleries and museums, but in reality it proves the strongest argument in their favour. The true use of such places is not so much to preserve a record of the past as to inform the taste and talent of the present, to give to the artist a higher ambition than mere splendour and display, and so to influence those in whose service

he has to labour that they may leave him free to give them the best that is in him. And this he can never do until the knowledge of what is great and true in art has reached the great body of the people who are neither patrons nor artists. It is they who in the last resort are the real arbiters of public taste in matters affecting the life of great cities, for it is to impress the popular imagination that money is most lavishly spent in public monuments and in private buildings; and if the work that is now produced in this kind is too often pretentious and intrinsically poor, it is because there is not sufficient knowledge in the mass of the people to correct the vulgar taste of those who have sought to win their admiration.

If these public galleries and museums, therefore, are really to serve the purpose for which they are established they must be ruled by no pedantic theory of exclusiveness. They must not be managed on the assumption that they exist for the benefit of professed students when in reality their main function is to create and encourage studentship in the public. From this point of view it must always be reckoned a fortunate thing when there happens to be some strong link of association between the museum and the town which will serve to awaken a more than common interest in its fortunes. Such a feature is supplied in the case of Angers by the remarkable collection of the works its native sculptor David, an artist of

rare power and of determined originality, exercised at a time when the sculptor's art in Europe was oppressed by a pedantic and paralysing tradition of style. The seated figure of Talma, of which I have already made mention, is one of a series of nearly two hundred examples, in relief and in the round, deposited in the museum, besides some four hundred medallions and a considerable number of original drawings. This valuable collection, presented to the town for the most part by the artist himself, is admirably displayed in the two lower galleries of the museum. Angers, in common with so many French cities, is fortunate in having found a home for its art treasures in a building which in itself presents features of high artistic interest. Built by Oliver Barrault in the last years of the 15th century, it exhibits that picturesque mingling of late Gothic and early Renaissance styles which gives such a strong fascination to much of the architecture of the Loire. Within its spacious walls room is found for the public library and a valuable museum of natural history as well as for the gallery of paintings belonging to the Municipality. Nearly the whole of the ground floor is occupied by the David collection, and amongst the more important works of the son are displayed some specimens of wood-carving executed by his father. They afford evidence to prove that the sculptor's gift was partly inherited, but it is remarkable that although he was himself a genuine artist, the elder David did all in

his power to discourage the strongly-marked artistic disposition of his child. But the boy's firm insistence prevailed, and after having commenced his studies in the art school at Angers he made his way on foot to Paris in the year 1803. He was then 20 years of age. At Paris he studied with unceasing and extraordinary activity, eking out a small subsistence by executing some ornamental designs for the decoration of the Arc de Carrousel. His growing talent, however, attracted notice, and on the urgent recommendation of Menagest and Pajou the town of Angers came to the youth's aid with an annual grant of 600 francs. For this act of liberality Angers has reaped a rich reward. In 1811, having gained the Grand Prix, David went to Rome, where he came into contact with Canova; but his intimacy with the eminent exponent of a smooth and enervated classicism did not in any way affect the exercise of his own individuality. He had already chosen for himself a different ideal in sculpture, in which there should be room for the free expression of modern sentiment and the vigorous rendering of strongly-defined character and personality. In regard to the works of dramatic invention which he produced there will be, as there always must be, some ground for difference of opinion, but there can be no question that he amply vindicated the merits of his system by the power which he displayed in the realm of portraiture. Few artists have better understood the conditions

of portrait sculpture, or have more skilfully combined the qualities of energy and vivacity in expression with the needful admixture of severe and dignified design. A certain admirable simplicity belongs to most even of his most youthful achievements, to the prize compositions executed during his stay in Rome, and to many of the bas-reliefs, notably the graceful design for the tomb of the Comte du Bourcke. With advancing power this direct simplicity in the mode of approaching his subject was greatly enriched by a finer and fuller treatment of detail, by greater resource in the grasp and delineation of individual traits of character, and by greater freedom in the manner of presentment. It is no part of my present task to attempt a full or just appreciation of these works of David, but it may be said generally that the inexhaustible gallery of portraits exhibited in the series of medallions and busts possesses the strongest historical as well as artistic interest. They include nearly all the most remarkable personages of the artist's generation, some of whom are still surviving. I may particularly mention the several busts of Victor Hugo, not the Victor Hugo of later years, with bearded chin, but with face clean shaven and with features sharply cut.

The paintings belonging to the town of Angers are arranged in handsome galleries on the upper floor. They number some 400 examples of various sorts, the greater part belonging to artists of the

French school. Since M. Clement de Ris published his interesting work on the provincial collections of France the Museum has been sensibly enriched by two munificent bequests of pictures and other works of art. In 1864 M. Jean Robin, who had begun life as a painter, and who, having afterwards inherited a considerable fortune, was enabled to exercise his artistic taste as a collector, bequeathed to the town of Angers a legacy of twelve paintings. One of the number, all of which are interesting and valuable, is a small but very beautiful picture by Raphael, now rightly reckoned as the gem of the municipal collection. It belongs to the earlier manner of the painter, according in sentiment and style as well as in delicacy of workmanship with the little composition of "The Knight's Dream" in the National Gallery. The subject here is "The Holy Family;" the infant Christ, held by his mother's hand, sits upon the back of a lamb, while St. Joseph, standing beside the Virgin, gazes fondly upon the child. It is exquisitely graceful in composition and brilliant in colour, and, despite the existence of another version of the same subject in the gallery at Madrid, the intrinsic beauty of the picture would seem to argue strongly in favour of its authenticity. That it has been in places cleverly restored is a fact that forms part of its curious history, for it once belonged to the collection of Prince Anatole Demidoff, and was injured while in his possession during the course of a

journey to Florence. It was owing to this accident that it was subsequently acquired by M. Robin, and is now permanently enshrined in the Museum at Angers. The second and more recent bequest is due to the liberality of M. de Crissey. It comprises a number of pictures of various schools, including two highly finished water colours by Ingres, and some valuable specimens of majolica and other objects of virtu.

Besides the little Raphael already mentioned, the Museum possesses several interesting examples of Italian art, and one or two good early copies of well-known masterpieces. I may mention in the latter class a reduced version of the "Charity" of Andrea del Sarto now in the Louvre. The original paintings include examples by Luca Giordano and a design for the decoration of a ceiling by Givoanni Battista Tiepolo. It is, however, in the art of Flanders and in the French painters of the last century that the Museum is most richly endowed. There is a superb study of a wounded dog by Snyders, a large but not very attractive picture of Christ disputing with the Doctors, by Philippe de Champagne, and one or two genuine examples by Rubens and Jordaens. Watteau is represented by a delightful "Fête de Campagne" marked by all the delicacy and finesse of his art, by his skill in rendering graceful and unconscious attitude and gesture, and by his feeling for rich harmonious colour. Of the two works

attributed to Pater that of "The Bathers" is, if my memory serves me, only an inferior version of a picture in Lord Lonsdale's collection. Lancret, the pupil of Watteau, is represented by four characteristic designs, and Greuze by a really delightful portrait of a lady with a dog. The more recent developments of French art are amply exhibited, and there are special collections of two individual artists of Angers—Bodinier and Lenepveu.

But there remains yet another museum at Angers, the Musée de St. Jean. On the opposite side of the river, in the great hall of the ancient Hospice of St. Jean, founded by Henry II., King of England and Count of Anjou, the Municipality has brought together an interesting collection of archæological remains and decorative objects, chiefly relating to the history of the city and the department. The Director of this Museum is doing excellent work, according to the means at his command. He is saving and carefully arranging in their chronological order interesting specimens illustrating the earlier architecture of the town; and as painting on glass forms one of the industries of Angers, he has collected a number of fragments of old glass of various epochs. The Musée de St. Jean promises to become in the highest degree useful and interesting, and it already bears witness to the energy of its Director as well as to the intelligent initiative of the Municipality. There is much, I think, to be said in favour of the

particular organisation by which this and the other museums of Angers are related to the Municipal Council. Nearly every city has its own peculiar method of dealing with these institutions, and that which Angers has adopted has certainly much in its favour. By a resolution of the Council passed in the summer of 1880, it was decided to elect separate committees for the permanent control of the four public institutions of art and science possessed by the town. These institutions are—1, the Museum of Fine Arts; 2, the Museum of Archæology; 3, the Museum of Natural History; and 4, the Botanical Gardens. Each of these establishments has its own director, elected by the Mayor, and it is the Mayor also who nominates for a period of three years the members of the different committees. The practical government of each museum is divided between the Director and the Committee. The Director submits to the Committee every year the proposed budget of expenses, and when it has been duly discussed and approved it is passed forward to the Mayor. To the Mayor also is forwarded a copy of the minutes of the monthly meetings of the Committee and an annual report upon the state of the public collections. As regards the composition of these different committees, the Mayor has complete liberty of choice. He is not bound to nominate any members of the Municipal Council, and indeed the present Mayor has made the Committee in each case entirely independent

of the Council. It may be added the Committee in each case consists of not less than five and not more than seven members.

### V.—NANTES.

The city of Nantes is rich in institutions devoted to the service of art. Besides its admirable Museum of Painting, founded in 1803, it possesses a Museum of Archæology under the intelligent control of M. Parenteau, where, in a stately edifice carefully and judiciously restored, are collected valuable records of antiquity and interesting monuments of the more modern history of the town and the department. It boasts, besides a School of Art under the control of the municipality, a special school directed to the encouragement of painting on porcelain, and a Society of Fine Arts under the presidency of M. Guillet. The Museum is a spacious and handsome building in the centre of the city, which is nevertheless inadequate for the complete display of its artistic possessions. Nantes offers a pre-eminent illustration of a phenomenon which constantly strikes the visitor to these great provincial centres, viz., the extraordinary munificence of private collectors whose fortunes have been in some way connected with the growth and progress of the town. The Museum had already been established some seven years when, in 1810, it acquired the vast and varied collection of M. François Cacault,

who, in virtue of his official position at Rome, had enjoyed rare opportunities for the gradual accumulation of examples of Italian art. When it is said that this gift comprised a total of 1,155 pictures, 64 works of sculpture, and nearly 11,000 engravings, it will be readily understood that it is not composed entirely of indisputable masterpieces. There are many indifferent paintings in the gallery at Nantes, some of which are due to the not always unimpeachable judgment of M. Cacault; but, after all deductions made on this score, it must be allowed that we have here a number of works such as even the most liberal collector would now find it hard to discover amid the ransacked resources of Italy. The gift of M. Cacault was mainly, though not exclusively, composed of paintings illustrating the history of Italian art. By reason of its very richness in this direction it left the Museum comparatively poorly furnished with examples of native and modern talent; but in 1852, through the generosity of the Duc de Feltre, an important addition was made to the gallery, and, as if it had been specially designed to supply the existing deficiency, the pictures which it comprised were for the most part notable achievements of the French school. To the same section of the Museum there came also in the year 1854 a handsome gift of thirty pictures, made by M. Urvoy de Saint Bedan.

Nantes, it must be further remembered, had

during the earlier years of the century already shared in the distribution of works of art made by the Government. It was one of the fifteen towns specially designated in the decree issued under the Consulate as a provincial centre for the reception of pictures drawn from the national resources. I have already referred to this decree as marking, in fact, the origin of the provincial museums of France, but in order clearly to understand the conditions under which such a liberal grant was made it is right to remember that the national collection at Paris did not then possess the settled character and status which now belong to it. The withdrawal of a certain number of pictures from Trafalgar Square would not, that is to say, be precisely analogous to the process of decentralisation sanctioned by Napoleon in 1800. The museum of the Louvre as a national institution had then only recently been founded out of the abundant royal treasures gradually accumulated since the time of Francis I. The number of works of which it should be permanently composed can hardly be said to have been as yet definitively determined; nor, on the other hand, was it only from the collections in the Louvre that the grant to the provinces was to be taken. There were other sources besides almost equally important, notably the series of pictures confiscated from the churches and convents of Paris, and the still larger and more valuable

collection borne from Italy by the victorious armies of the Republic. Nevertheless it is certainly true that the general policy of allowing the great provincial centres to share with the capital in the enjoyment of the national treasures was distinctly entertained by those to whom the measure is due; and as the matter has a present interest in view of recent discussions among ourselves it may be worth while to quote the following passage contained in Chaptal's report to Napoleon. "Without doubt," he writes, "Paris ought to retain the great masterpieces in every department; in the national collection at Paris ought to reside those works which have the most important bearing on the history of art, which mark its development, characterise its different modes of expression, and enable the student to read upon the face of the pictures themselves the signs of successive revolutions and epochs in painting. Paris from every point of view deserves this honourable distinction, but the dwellers in the provinces have also a clear right to share in the fruit of our conquests and in the inheritance of works by native artists." It may be added that this policy, initiated by Napoleon, has never been reversed in France, and that the museums of the provinces still from time to time receive some interesting contributions from the mass of unexhibited works belonging to the Louvre, apart from special gifts of contemporary achievements in painting and sculpture.

Many of the pictures at Nantes are of a kind that have an obvious fitness and value in a provincial museum. I refer to the ancient and in many instances contemporary copies of famous masterpieces, copies executed in the spirit, and often, as it must have been, under the eyes, of the artists whose work they present to us. Chief among these is a version of the "Vierge aux Rochers" of Leonardo da Vinci, which takes rank in the catalogue as an original. It differs in several details of design and colour alike from the picture in the Louvre and from the still nobler rendering of the same subject recently acquired for our National Gallery. In subtlety of expression in the faces, in depth and delicacy of tone, and in the slighter treatment of the landscape background it is manifestly inferior to both, and is hardly, therefore, to be accepted as an authentic example of the rarest and most fastidious of all the great masters of the past. It is extraordinary how even in the hands of the most skilful of his followers the chosen type of Leonardo loses something of its strange witchery and approaches more nearly to common life. Such a transformation is noticeable here, though the work is full of beauty and commends itself as a genuine product of the school. The version of Andrea del Sarto's "Charity" which hangs in the same gallery is not quite so interesting a performance. Either it is a later copy than the catalogue would have us believe or it has undergone

some painful process of restoration. In any case, it now only imperfectly presents to us the soft and delicate surface characteristic of the painter's style, though the graceful composition of course remains intact. Another of the series of copies in which the Nantes Museum is so rich is a reduced version of Veronese's "Marriage of Cana." Among the works received in the original endowment made by the State are figures of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, belonging to the series of works executed by Perugino at Perugia. The provincial cities of France are rich in the paintings of this master, and these two circular compositions are not the most interesting of the number. More important in every way in its bearing upon the history of Italian art is the unfinished group of the Holy Family here ascribed to Domenico Ghirlandajo. Technically, and even in regard to certain qualities of style, the picture bears a curious and puzzling resemblance to the unfinished group by Michael Angelo in the National Gallery. The resemblance is puzzling, because, though in many respects close enough, the Nantes picture shows an inferior power of draughtsmanship and a less distinct feeling for beauty. On the other hand, it is marked by deeper sentiment and a more passionate intention in the rendering of character. This is especially noticeable in the treatment of the Virgin's face, and is in itself sufficient evidence, I think, that Ghirlandajo, the least passionate of

Florentine painters, had no hand in its execution. But, leaving the question of authorship on one side, it is undoubtedly a work of great charm and of curious interest, which the Museum is fortunate in having acquired amid the miscellaneous collection of M. Cacault. Another beautiful little example of Florentine art, from the same source, is rightly ascribed to Pesellino. It represents different trials in the life of one of the saints, and is executed with a perfection of finish that is happily undestroyed either by time or restoration. The Venetian school is represented by a great variety of work, not all of which, however, can be considered acceptable. Perhaps the most interesting specimen, despite the presence of a number of reputed Giorgiones, is an unfinished design of "Christ Bearing the Cross," modestly described in the catalogue as after Titian. The finished picture exists in the Church of San Rocco at Venice, and it is therefore reasonable to assume that we have here only a copy, begun by one of the master's pupils. And yet the execution is so admirable that it would certainly not disgrace the master himself. Of the Dutch and Flemish school there are altogether some 250 examples of very unequal quality. A large "Triumph" by Rubens is an example in the same manner as the "Victory and Mars" at Tours, but is far inferior in brilliancy and strength of colour. Rembrandt figures with a single but solid specimen of his earlier method, careful and exact

in detail, and smooth in surface. The subject is a portrait bust of a young woman, and the picture is one of the most noteworthy additions made to the gallery by M. Urvoy de Saint Bedan. Another remarkable portrait in the same gallery is the full-length of a little girl which the catalogue doubtfully ascribes to Cuyp. It is difficult to conceive by whom else it could be. Cuyp may be said to have anticipated Reynolds in a certain rare sympathy with childish character admirably exercised in the work under notice, which possesses besides excellent qualities of painting.

The illustration of the growth of the modern French school supplied by the museums of France is apt to become monotonous to the visitor who passes rapidly from one town to another. To those for whom it is specially presented it does not, however, lie open to the same reproach. And it must, moreover, be admitted that even here nearly every city has some special feature peculiar to itself. Nantes is particularly strong in the works of Paul Delaroche, of whom it possesses no less than thirteen examples, and in the pictures of the animal painter, Bracassat, an artist of very remarkable talent, whose life has been written by M. Charles Marionneau.

#### VI.—LIMOGES.

In the autumn of last year there died at Jarnac, on the Charente, a wealthy brandy merchant, who

had been some time Mayor of Limoges. Adrien Dubouché belonged to a family whose name had long been honourably connected with the commerce of the department. By his own energy and enterprise he had himself greatly increased the fortune inherited from his father, but to a capacity for affairs he joined a genuine and generous enthusiasm for art, and when the occasion offered itself he proved that he could put his resources both of wealth and connoisseurship to a noble use. The career of M. Dubouché presents, indeed, a singular instance of what may be done for the artistic development of a great industrial centre by a man who has the means at his disposal, and, what is no less essential, has faith in the task that he has set himself to accomplish. Until he had inspired his fellow-citizens with something of his own enlightened zeal, Limoges can scarcely be said to have shown any special concern for the cause of art. Its municipal collection of pictures and works of art was small and insignificant, nor did the town then boast of any school deserving the name. Such indifference and neglect are somewhat surprising, for Limoges inherited from the past a noble tradition. During the period of the Renaissance in France it was one of the centres of artistic enterprise, and the production of the enamels of Limoges engaged the services of a goodly company of painters, with Léonard Limousin at their head. The special direction of

its modern industry seemed equally to demand the presence and support of a certain degree of artistic culture, and yet it was not till 1867, and on the initiative of M. Dubouché, that a matter of so much moment was seriously taken in hand. In that year M. Dubouché founded the Museum of Ceramic Art which now bears his name, and in 1868 the townspeople, acting in concert with the Corporation, established a school of painting and design specially devoted to the study of decorative art. Both these institutions were the objects of M. Dubouché's watchful and generous solicitude up till the date of his death. In October, 1875, Albert Jacquemart died, leaving behind him a magnificent collection of faience and porcelain, a collection particularly rich in chosen specimens of Oriental ware. The treasures which Jacquemart had accumulated were the fruit of years of patient and earnest research in the history of a branch of art to which he was passionately attached. Nearly every piece included in the series has some special value and significance in relation to the development of the craft which it illustrates. It was therefore emphatically a collection to serve the purposes of serious studentship. Had it been broken up and distributed among competing collectors its almost unique importance would have been destroyed. It was M. Dubouché who averted this threatened misfortune. He perceived at once the great interest of Jacquemart's labours to a city

actively associated in the manufacture of porcelain, and at an outlay of 70,000 francs he transferred the collection intact to his newly-founded museum. Five years later another opportunity presented itself, and was seized with equal readiness and generosity. The collection of M. Paul Gasnault in a manner supplemented that of Jacquemart. It comprised a rich and varied assortment of works of European manufacture. It included also admirable specimens of majolica, of the sculptured faience of Luca della Robbia, and an interesting series of Limoges enamels. In point of money value it far surpassed the Jacquemart acquisition, but this fact had no influence upon M. Dubouché, whose heart was with the fortunes of his museum, and at a cost of 200,000 francs the Gasnault collection was also secured for Limoges.

Here in outline we have the brief and yet brilliant history of the museum of Limoges. If the constant study of the masterpieces of the past is of any service to the cause of art it cannot be without its influence upon the industry of the town, for as a representative display of the successive achievements in the history of faience and porcelain it is almost unequalled. And what increases its practical importance and usefulness is the fact that it is no mere show-place designed to awaken the admiration of the tourist or to glorify the name of a wealthy citizen. In close association with the museum and under the same roof is the school of

decorative art, which also owes much to the fostering care of M. Dubouché. The two establishments belong to one intelligent and comprehensive scheme of art education, and the manner in which they are appreciated by the classes for whose benefit they were specially designed is sufficient evidence of their solid and substantial worth. Nor have the generous labours of the late Mayor of Limoges been allowed to pass without official recognition. The museum and school which M. Dubouché so carefully tended now occupy a unique position among the artistic institutions of the provinces. In virtue of a decree issued shortly after the death of their founder, they have been dignified with a national character and status. The museums I have hitherto described, as well as the various schools of art, have been the property of the several municipalities and have been held under municipal control. The relation of such institutions to the State is uncertain and undefined, consisting for the most part in periodical gifts of pictures and other works of art. But in Limoges an exceptional state of things has been created in view of the exceptional importance of its artistic development. The museum and the school have been ceded by the city to the State, and all questions of organisation and control are now directly within the jurisdiction of the Minister of Fine Arts. The different officers of the museum and the professors of the school are the servants of

the Government, and are wholly independent of the Corporation. As regards the annual budget for the support of the establishment, the State and the town contribute in equal proportions, and now that it has been decided to reconstruct the present buildings in order to provide increased space both for the classes and for the museum a vote of 1,600,000 francs has been passed by the Chamber for this purpose, to which the municipality has added a further sum of 200,000 francs. It will be understood from what has been said that this intervention of the State in the artistic affairs of Limoges is proffered and accepted as a mark of special distinction and honour. The work of the municipality had been carried to a point where it was felt to merit national recognition, and the service which M. Dubouché had rendered to his native city is thus placed upon a basis of permanence and stability. The fact, however, that such a measure could be promptly and effectively carried out affords significant and striking proof of the readiness with which the machinery of art administration in France moves to accomplish its ends. Limoges is not one of the largest cities of the Republic. It only counts some 60,000 inhabitants, and one cannot but reflect upon the obstacles and hindrances that a city similarly situated in our own country would have to encounter in order to attain a position of equal pre-eminence.

It must be conceded, on the other hand, that private enterprise had already done much to anticipate the action of the State. Private enterprise is a quality which we are apt to regard as being of peculiarly British growth, and it may therefore be worth while to state precisely what is being done by the School of Decorative Art in Limoges. And as it is now scarcely more than a year since it has been reconstituted under the Government, it will be fair to assume that the foundations of its present prosperity were already firmly established in the summer of 1881. Having regard to the very large number of pupils enrolled in the different classes, it is not surprising that the professors are eagerly looking forward to the increased space which the new building will place at their command. Limoges counts in all upwards of 1,250 art students. Of this total there are about 600 youths or men and 400 girls who are following out the full course of study; the remaining 250 are made up of pupil teachers of both sexes, who are studying in order to qualify themselves to give the necessary instruction in drawing required for the national schools. The social status and employment of the students is even more significant of the practical usefulness of the school. By far the larger proportion of the attendants of the male classes are actually employed in the porcelain manufactories of the town, and that they are acquiring from their study a knowledge and skill that will be

serviceable to them in their craft is proved by the fact that the school arouses a sentiment of pronounced hostility among the older artisans who have not enjoyed the advantages which it offers. They view with considerable jealousy the entry into the factories of a race of workmen highly trained both in the principles and the practice of their art.

What, it may be asked, is the secret by which the School of Decorative Art at Limoges has been enabled so speedily to establish these intimate relations with the industry of the town? Something, no doubt, is due to the energy and zeal with which the scheme was started; something, also, to the *éclat* which now belongs to the establishment since it has been taken over by the State. But the true source of its success lies deeper, and is to be sought, I think, in the quality of the teaching that is provided and in the conditions under which it is offered to the students. It must never be forgotten that the teaching in these provincial art schools is wholly gratuitous, and when this teaching assumes the special and technical character which belongs to it at Limoges the fact has an obvious importance and influence. Perhaps on no other terms would the hard-worked artisans in the factories flock in such numbers to the classes held every evening from eight to ten. This, it may be, is the original condition of success, but even this alone would not account for the singular prosperity of the school, which is only to be explained by refer-

ence to the practical and at the same time comprehensive character of the course of study offered to the students. The School of Decorative Art at Limoges has never lost sight of the object for which it was originated, viz., to educate artists and artisans in branches of industry connected with art. Its professors are not specially concerned to create a race of picture painters; when a student shows an aptitude and preference for the exclusive practice of ideal design in painting or sculpture he is sent, when the opportunity offers, to the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. The forces and resources of the school are directed rather to the study of art as a means of decoration, and more especially in its relation to the manufacture of porcelain. But there is no neglect of the fundamental principles of design. I had an opportunity of carefully examining a vast number of studies executed by the pupils of the different classes, and it was certainly a pleasure to observe the scientific method and order with which the course of instruction is gradually developed by the teachers. There is, for instance, a special class for the study of flowers, but the pupils are not left merely to produce a pictorial representation of the subject set before them. Each flower is also carefully analysed with a view to its service for the purposes of composition, the anatomy of its structure is clearly explained by the professor and is carefully noted by the pupil, and when a certain degree of pro-

ficiency has been attained experiments are made in the invention of floral ornament and design, and in the application of such ornament to cups, vases, and plates. I have dealt with a course of study that is special to the school of Limoges, but it is not to be supposed that the student is pitchforked into the practice of decorative design without having acquired the first principles of his art. The drawings from the figure which were shown to me prove that the specialist character of the school has not been allowed to dwarf the course of general study. And I may note also the important place assigned to modelling and ornamental sculpture. The practice of modelling gives a cunning and subtlety to his hand that can scarcely be acquired in any other way. It adds craftsmanship to art, and it is therefore of the first importance to a school which is specially devoted to the education of artisans. At Limoges the forms of flowers are treated in the clay, and the artist is enabled to attempt such designs in relief as are specially adapted to reproduction in porcelain. There are besides special classes for the consideration of the technical conditions of painting on china with regard to the chemical action on colour of the different kinds of furnaces employed. In short, the student in the school at Limoges is enabled to follow the process of manufacture from the commencement to its conclusion. He can model the form of a vase or plate and

decorate it with ornament in relief. He can then add the design in colour, using the experience that he has gained from the study of flowers, and lastly he can follow the work to completion by subjecting it to the final process of firing.

I should add a word as to the machinery provided by the State for the conduct and control of the National School of Decorative Art at Limoges. The director and the administrative officers of the school, consisting of a secretary, an accountant, and male and female overseers of the different classes, are, as I have already explained, nominated by the Minister of Fine Arts. The director in turn submits to the Minister the names of those who are to fill the professorial chairs. These professors are five in number, and they constitute, with the director as their president, a permanent council charged with the practical organisation of the classes. They meet regularly once a month, and in the month of July in each year they draw up a prospectus of the classes for the ensuing twelve months. In all essential matters, therefore, the intermediary between the school and the central authority is the director, who, besides being the president of the council of professors, is *ex officio* president of all juries appointed to adjudicate upon the annual competitions for the prizes offered to the students. It is the director who reports to the Minister upon all matters affecting the discipline and organisation of the school, and it

is he also who controls the expenses and who urges upon the attention of the Government any proposition of reform which may seem necessary or advisable. But there is besides a superior council, which is constituted to watch over the fortunes of the school, and which is convened on special occasions by the Minister of Fine Arts, by whom its members are nominated for a period of three years. Besides the Minister himself, who acts as president of the council, it consists of the prefect of the department and the mayor of Limoges, vice presidents; the inspector of schools for the department, two members of the Municipal Council of Limoges, the President of the Chamber of Commerce of Limoges, the architect and the director of the school, and of five members chosen by the Minister from amongst the manufacturers or other eligible inhabitants of the district.

## VII.—BORDEAUX.

“Our pictures,” says a native writer of Bordeaux, “are still housed in ill-lighted and inconvenient apartments, where they await the erection, so long and so often promised, of an appropriate gallery, such as the continued growth of our collections and the care that is due to their preservation render every day more urgent and necessary.” This is the complaint of M. Delpit, the learned historian of the artistic institutions of the city, uttered some

thirty years ago, and the vicissitudes which have since overtaken the Bordeaux art treasures prove that the warning which he uttered was not without warrant. At that date the pictures and sculptures belonging to the city were lodged in the audience chambers on the ground floor of the Hotel de Ville. In 1862 a portion of the building was destroyed by fire, and this led to the removal of a certain number of the pictures to a temporary asylum in the gardens of the Mairie. With the German invasion a new danger threatened the city. It was thought that valuable works of art would be imperfectly protected in the temporary building in which they were placed, and they were accordingly taken back to an isolated wing of the municipal building. But during all this time some of the larger and more important canvases still remained in the rooms on the ground floor of the Hotel de Ville, which were now occupied by officers of the National Guard; and here, through the careless overheating of a stove, a second fire occurred, which unhappily resulted in serious and irreparable loss. The celebrated picture by Eugene Delacroix, the "Chasse aux Lions," was entirely destroyed. Nothing now remains but a charred and blackened fragment of the upper portion of the design; and when I was at Bordeaux, a native artist, who had fortunately made a sketch of the entire composition when it was intact, was engaged upon the melancholy task of executing a full-size copy of the great painter's

ruined work. The pictures were then removed to a gallery adjoining the Museum of Natural History in the public gardens of the town, and it was not until the year 1874 that the plans for the present buildings were finally accepted by the Corporation. Bordeaux has suffered by this long delay, but it has gained in the end a public monument worthy of the city and admirably adapted to its purpose. There is something very original and attractive in the extreme simplicity of the new galleries. The space at the disposal of the architect was the garden of the Hotel de Ville, but he has not striven, as might perhaps have been expected, to rival the older building by a grand and imposing modern structure, nor has he destroyed the charm and beauty of the gardens themselves. His work takes its place unobtrusively amid the earlier surroundings of the place. Having to design a building for the display of painting and sculpture, he has kept himself strictly to his task, and by this means has produced a work that is entirely unpretentious, but is nevertheless graceful and elegant and convincingly appropriate. I have spoken of it as one building, but in fact there are two distinct galleries separated by an intervening space of open garden. Each of these galleries is built upon the ground level, so that the visitor enters without the fatigue of mounting a lofty staircase. From the fact of being only a single storey in height, they have the effect of pavilions, to which the

ornamental gardens form a fitting setting. They are divided into a series of different apartments, lofty and well lighted, and which even in the intense heat of a southern summer are not uncomfortably warm. The architectural division into two separate wings accords perfectly with the method that has been adopted in the arrangement of the pictures. On one side of the garden are the works of the earlier schools; on the other are found the examples of native and national art. This arrangement has been admirably carried out by M. Vallet, the present director of the museum, to whom has fallen the responsible task of transferring the collections to the new building. In Bordeaux the director's authority is more complete than in some other of the large cities, and his individual responsibility is correspondingly increased. There is here no special committee appointed to the permanent control of the municipal museums, but in place of this arrangement the Mayor nominates one member of the Council as "adjoint," with particular functions in regard to the theatres, public gardens, and museums. How far this system is found to work well in other matters I do not pretend to say, but as a mode of dealing with the interests of art it is not viewed with favour by those whose opinion is most entitled to weight. The "adjoint," being of necessity a member of the Council, has often to be chosen without special qualifications for the task entrusted to him. He therefore fails to secure the

entire confidence either of the director on the one hand or of the municipality on the other, and thus the relations between these two authorities are apt to become uncertain and ill-defined. I think that on the whole the system I have described as existing at Angers, where an independent committee of control is appointed by the Corporation, is thought to ensure a better and more settled system of organisation; and it undoubtedly serves at the same time to awaken a keener interest in the fortunes of the museum amongst those citizens who by taste and knowledge are fitted to take an active share in its management. But whatever may be the defects of the present system, it must at least be conceded that the municipality at Bordeaux evinces a liberal spirit in regard to art. For the support of the museum of painting and sculpture it provides an annual grant of 12,500f., which is independent of the salaries of the director and his subordinates. In addition to this a fund of 10,000f. is appropriated every year to the purchase of works of painting and sculpture. These sums are not perhaps very large in themselves, but it must be remembered that they refer to only one of several institutions which have a claim upon the city purse. There is besides a Museum of Antiquities, to which the Corporation also makes a substantial contribution, not to speak of the School of Art, where the instruction, as everywhere throughout France, is wholly gratuitous,

and with which in the case of Bordeaux a special school of sculpture is associated. The annual exhibitions of modern art are in the hands of an independent society founded in the year 1851.

As a representative collection the series of modern pictures forms perhaps the more important section of the museum. Bordeaux possesses capital examples of the past and the present generation of French artists, many of them secured at a time when their authors had not yet come to be ranked as great masters. From this point of view the destruction of Delacroix's fine picture is the more deplorable as in the present galleries it would have served to complete the historical review of the French school. The painter, however, is still represented on the walls by two smaller works, one of which, a study of a crouching lion, is admirably characteristic of his vigorous design and brilliant colouring. But it is in the department of modern French landscape that the gallery is most richly endowed. In the group of gifted men who more than forty years ago effected a revolution in the study of nature there was one whose memory the city has a special right to cherish and honour. Narcisse Diaz was born at Bordeaux in the year 1807. He perhaps never attained the power of Theodore Rousseau, with whose sentiment in art he showed the closest sympathy, nor have his landscapes the delicate poetry of Corot, or the dramatic force of representation

which lay within the command of painters like Daubigny and Dupré. And yet, in virtue of a certain elegance of style combined with rich and luxuriant colouring, he holds an undisputed place beside these greater masters. "The Forest of Fontainebleau," says M. Philippe Burty, one of the most intelligent eulogists of the Romantic movement, "loses in Diaz an artist who had the truest perception of its peculiar charm. He did not see it in its sombre grandeur; he felt its delight and fascination. No one has so successfully caught the spirit of the pleasure parties that crowd its shady alleys in spring time and summer. No one has rendered with such astonishing effect the bright flashes of slanting sunlight upon the trunks of its beeches and birch trees. No one, again, has translated with such force and brilliancy the velvet surface of its moss-grown rocks or the embrowned gold of its autumn foliage." I have quoted these eloquent words of M. Burty because they are strictly appropriate to the admirable picture by Diaz which hangs in the museum of his native town. The scene is in the Forest of Fontainebleau at the moment when recent rains have left pools of water standing amid the trees, whose leaves here and there are transformed with the first touches of autumn weather. The delicate outlines of the upper branches are forcibly relieved against a tranquil sky, and below the sombre depth of the forest is lightened

with brilliant passages of colour which shine and sparkle in the humid atmosphere. It is, in truth, a superb example of the master, approaching more nearly than any painting of his that I know to the force and depth of his greater contemporary, Théodore Rousseau. This picture was acquired in 1872 from one of the annual exhibitions of modern work held at Bordeaux, and from the same source was also derived the large landscape by Corot, a work of even greater importance, now worth many times the sum for which it was originally purchased. This is one of Corot's most characteristic designs, wherein his modern feeling for the subtle beauties of light and air is associated with the representation of a theme of classic grace. Corot never yielded to the reproaches of his critics on this score. He continued to the close of his career to infuse this element of antique fancy into his studies of nature, and the fairy character that belongs to his work, the magical lightness and grace which he was able to impart to the interpretation of rural beauty, serves to effect the desired harmony between the life of the present and the past. "Les Bords de l'Oise," by Daubigny, may be said to complete the representation of the great modern movement of the Romantic school. In certain qualities of realistic strength Daubigny had no equal in the gifted band of painters with whom he was associated. No one else could so forcibly seize upon the sudden harmonies of earth and sky which a passing effect of

atmosphere grants to a chosen scene. Here he is seen in a more tranquil mood, with masses of sumptuous colour broadly and simply disposed, but the theme, though it lies a little beyond the accustomed range of his art, is treated with perfect mastery and ease.

I have taken these three pictures as capital specimens of what the Bordeaux Museum contains in its modern section. They do not, of course, exhaust the list even of excellent landscapes, and they leave out of count a great variety of work in other kinds. Moreover it must be added that the earlier phases of French art are by no means neglected. There is a beautiful little portrait belonging to the school of François Clouet, scarcely unworthy of the master himself, and there are also respectable examples of Mignard, Claude, and Coypel. But it is time to say a word about the collection of ancient masters lying upon the opposite side of the garden. The Italian pictures, with a few notable exceptions, are not of the highest value. Bordeaux shared in the liberal distribution of works by the State made in the beginning of the century, but it was not so fortunate as some of its rivals in securing works of great interest or importance. In 1828, however, the town acquired by purchase the valuable gallery of M. de Lacaze, and this, together with subsequent additions, served greatly to raise the dignity and character of the museum. The capital piece of the collection is a large and graceful composition

by Perugino originally belonging to the Church of St. Augustin at Perugia. Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, who, however, admit that they had not seen the picture, conjecture that it is the work described by Constantine as being by a pupil of the master. Its intrinsic merits would seem by no means to warrant this suggestion. It is in every way worthy of Perugino himself, and although it is said to have undergone some restoration at the beginning of the century, its condition compares favourably with works by the same hand in other museums of the provinces. I cannot speak with the same confidence of the little sketch of the "Triumph of Galatea" formerly in the Lacaze collection, and ascribed to Titian, or of the Magdalen set down to Guido Reni. Two canvases bearing the name of Paul Veronese have a better claim to authenticity, and there is a graceful composition by Tiepolo which is indisputably genuine. Perhaps the most important picture in this section is a portrait of Don Luis de Haro ascribed to Murillo. Without precisely suggesting the style of this particular master, it is a work which is certainly worthy of his or even of a greater hand. It is marked by artistic qualities of the very highest order, and is equally admirable for the strength of its characterisation and the beauty and force of its workmanship.

## VIII.—TOULOUSE.

Toulouse is a veritable city of the south. Even the short journey from Bordeaux marks a distinct change of character and life, and seems to carry the traveller suddenly into a new and different atmosphere. The capital of the ancient province of Languedoc, one reminds oneself, is still the home of the "Gai Sçavoir." Here every May time the Société des Jeux Floreaux, which holds its title from the Troubadours, meets to listen to the verses of local poets, and to crown with flowers the essays of successful competitors. But even without the survival of these legendary rites, the city would impress the visitor with its strongly-marked individuality and with the sentiment of a southern civilisation. The wide open market-place, laden with peaches and melons, which come like a fairy mushroom growth at daybreak, and vanish, as if by magic, before mid-day, strikes upon the sense as a foretaste of Italy, recalling memories of Mantua and Verona. And if the spirit of the south still dwells in the life of the present, it breathes even more strongly in the remaining records of the past. All that is interesting in the art of Toulouse speaks to us of the art of Rome. Here it is not the work of the Renaissance, when men were striving to revive and to renew a forgotten ideal of beauty, that appeals to the imagination, but the exquisite monuments of an earlier age that yet held unbroken

the tradition of classic style, refreshed but not effaced by the touch of that new and tender feeling for nature which was destined to give a lasting charm to the creations of Gothic art. At Toulouse it is possible to appreciate at its full value the Romanesque architecture of Southern France. In the presence of a building like the Church of Saint Sernin, the word acquires definite and intelligible meaning, and a glance at the contents of the museum of Toulouse helps us also to understand the influences under which such a style grew to perfection. There, in the mass of interesting remains collected from the town and the province, it may be seen how deeply implanted was the spirit of Roman civilisation and Roman art. In this respect no museum of the Republic is more richly endowed, although the present is not a favourable moment for the careful study of these treasures. The Museum of Toulouse is in course of reconstruction. The building which it now occupies, the ancient church and monastery of the Augustins, is not altogether suitable to the purpose to which it has been applied. The gallery of paintings, the least remarkable section of the museum, is placed in the church itself, which in spite of alterations which have gone far to ruin its architectural character is very ill adapted for the exhibition of works of art. In the chapter-house are arranged an excellent series of casts from the antique for the use of the students of the school of art, and in the

elegant cloisters, one of the most beautiful examples of Gothic art to be found in this part of France, are displayed the series of antiquities to which I have already referred. But these several departments of the museum are now thrown into disorder by reason of the work of restoration and reconstruction which has lately been begun. The cloisters are being newly roofed in, and when this operation is complete the collection of Gallo-Roman remains will be re-arranged in their former order. For the more modern works possessed by the museum, including the gallery of paintings, an entirely new building is to be erected on the site adjoining the cloisters and facing the public street. Some considerable time must elapse before these important changes can be carried into effect, and in the meantime many of the pictures are stored away, and a large portion of the collection of antique vases and jewellery is practically inaccessible. It would be obviously unjust, therefore, to dwell too hardly on the apparently neglected condition of the pictures, which have, perhaps, suffered from influences beyond the control of the authorities. It must, however, be admitted that the Museum of Toulouse lacks the impress of vitality and progress which belongs especially to the artistic institution of towns like Bordeaux and Marseilles. In the intrinsic value of its possessions it can bear comparison with either, but there is about the whole establishment a sense of depression and neglect which would seem

to betoken that the institution is only remotely related to the life and movement of the modern town. Such a state of things serves to give especial force to a reflection that applies in some measure to the administration of nearly all the provincial museums of France. The artistic wealth of these great towns is nearly everywhere remarkable and surprising, but the collections of original work are not arranged in such a way as to form a connected history of art. From an educational point of view the result is often disappointing and incomplete, for the reason that no pains have been taken to supplement the original records by such a series of reproductions as would form a comprehensive survey of the successive epochs in art to which they belong. It is possible to conceive that to the average citizen these museums must often prove dull and uninteresting. He lacks the knowledge that would serve to bind the different objects of interest into a connected whole, and give to each isolated example its appropriate place in the general development of art. No provincial city, however fortunate, can hope to vie with the capital in the extent of its artistic possessions, and it is therefore indispensable that these different local centres, if they are to serve a higher purpose than that of mere storehouses for fragmentary and incomplete collections, should add to their original resources such a series of casts or copies, executed according to the nature

of the material, as would serve to illustrate, at least in outline, the wider movement of artistic invention and style. It is only by such means that the unlearned visitor can possess himself of a true standard by which to appreciate and enjoy the original work in these local museums. A collection of copies alone, however comprehensive, would no doubt prove lifeless and uninspiring. There is a superior magic in the influence of an original masterpiece that is not to be disputed, but at the same time this influence is sorely weakened when a beautiful object, in whatever department of art, has to make its appeal without the help of any illustrative surroundings. There is a talk at the present time of establishing a closer relation between these municipal museums and the central government, and one of the good results that might be expected from such a measure would be an increase in the educational value of these establishments.

The antiquities located in the Museum of Toulouse are largely derived from excavations made near the small town of Martres, on the banks of the Garonne. They include a very interesting series of portrait busts of Roman emperors, besides smaller works in bronze, together with carvings in relief, altars and inscriptions, and fragments of architectural ornament. There is also a really magnificent collection of antique jewellery discovered during the making of the canal at

Fenouillet, and to these treasures of purely local origin must be added the Greek and Etruscan vases from the cabinet of the Comte de Clarac, and from the collection brought from Civita Vecchia by M. Barry. It is by a natural transition that we pass from these records of Roman supremacy in France to the architectural and sculptured remains of the Middle Ages, where the impress of Roman art is still deeply marked, and upon which the representation of Pagan legends sometimes mingles with the images of Christian symbolism. Many of the most interesting of these carvings come from the ancient cemetery of St. Sernin, and help to emphasise and to illustrate the uninterrupted continuance of the sentiment of classic art which prevailed from the time of the Roman occupation to the twelfth century. The Romanesque building of the South of France is indeed in a two-fold sense the product of classical tradition, for the principles of construction at first derived from Rome were subsequently modified by Greek artists of the Lower Empire. "L'Eglise de Saint Sernin," writes M. Viollet-le-Duc, "est un des monuments de nos provinces méridionales qui donne la plus vive empreinte de ces influences Romane-Grecques et des principes de proportion qui avaient été appliqués à la structure Romaine par les Grecs du Bas Empire." It is noteworthy that this wonderful building also supplies an interesting illustration of the oriental influence that is characteristic of the architecture of

the epoch. The Venetian traders with the East already in the tenth century had their agents in Southern and Central France who dealt in Oriental stuffs and objects of art; and in the choir of the Church of St. Sernin are some archaic figures in relief, clearly of Oriental origin, which M. Viollet-le-Duc believes to have been enlarged and clumsy copies of Byzantine ivories. Here, then, we have the crude expression of a sentiment that enters with greater subtlety into nearly all the decorative sculpture of Romanesque building, and which may be plainly traced in the wonderfully carved corbels and capitals of St. Sernin. It would be easy to linger too long over the study of this beautiful church, which, from an artistic point of view, is the most interesting feature of Toulouse. In unity and elegance of design it is certainly superior to the Romanesque churches of Auvergne, and in the measured grace and severity of its style it holds its own even with the most sumptuous examples of the Gothic building of a later century.

But I must not quit Toulouse without a word as to the collection of pictures, which numbers one or two works of first-rate quality. Prominent in this category is the group of two figures of St. John and St. Augustine by Perugino, part of a tryptich the pendant to which is found at Lyons. The surface of the painting has manifestly suffered by restoration, and perhaps also from the damp atmosphere of the building, but these injuries

have left intact the beautiful design and the graceful sentiment expressed in the faces. This is almost the only Italian picture of any mark in the collection now exhibited. There are however one or two interesting specimens of early Florentine art lately acquired by the Museum which await the completion of the new building before they can be shown to the public. The Flemish and German schools do not fare much better, although there is of course a Rubens in the catalogue, and a much injured painting of the master on the wall. More interesting, because in a more genuine state of preservation, is the fine composition by Lucas François, who though an older contemporary of Rubens, was obviously affected by his style. The French school, both in its earlier and late developments, is more worthily represented. There are excellent examples of Delacroix, Henner, Gerome, and Laurens, and among the works illustrating the earlier phases of French painting are some notable portraits by native artists of Toulouse.

The art schools of Toulouse, founded as early as the middle of the 17th century, exhibit in comparison with the Museum a higher degree of prosperity. I have already noticed the excellent collection of casts provided for the use of the pupils, and in the chapter-house where they are disposed I had an opportunity of examining some of the competitive designs recently executed in the school. I was struck especially by a fact that can never fail to

impress the English visitor to these schools, offering as it does so strange a contrast with our own artistic development. I refer to the important place assigned to the study of sculpture and to the unquestioned excellence of many of the models executed by the students. There is no town of the provinces where methodical instruction in the art of modelling does not form an integral part of the regular curriculum, but the attention given to this branch of art in Toulouse demands special remark. The city, it is true, enjoys a long-established tradition of proficiency in this department carrying us back to the artists of the 12th century. And the portal which stands before the southern door of St. Sernin reminds us also that a Toulousian sculptor figured among the workmen of the Renaissance connecting the fame of his native city with the name of Michael Angelo. Bachelier, the author of this work, was one of the pupils of the great Florentine, and he shows in his delicate carving in relief the influence of Italian invention and style. I may add that in point of numbers the school at Toulouse is in a flourishing condition. There are altogether upwards of 800 pupils, and every three years the town gives three grand prizes of 1,800 francs a year to enable successful competitors to proceed to Paris.

## IX.—MONTPELLIER.

Montpellier enjoys an enviable distinction among the cities of the Republic. In regard to the paintings of the great schools of the past, the schools of Italy, of Holland, and of Flanders, its museum is beyond comparison the richest and the most interesting in the whole of Provincial France; and even in the records of contemporary art, in the work of men still living or but lately dead, it can compete on equal terms with the most fortunate of its rivals. The circumstances which have raised Montpellier to this proud position deserve remembrance, for they bear witness to that extraordinary munificence on the part of private collectors which I have already remarked as the most striking feature in the history of these local institutions of art. To the favour of the state the town owes little or nothing. In later years it has enjoyed the ordinary measure of official patronage, receiving from time to time pictures purchased from the annual exhibitions of the Salon, or withdrawn from the inexhaustible stores of the Louvre. But at the date of the origin of the Museum it had to plead piteously even for a few canvases which might serve to inspire the efforts of local students and form the nucleus of a future collection. Montpellier was not in the list of those fortunate places destined to share in the spoils of foreign conquest and to divide the superfluous artistic treasures of the capital. It got nothing from

the famous decree of the First Consul, by which other towns were so greatly enriched, and in the following year we find the local professor of art begging from the Minister of the Interior the gift of "a few examples from among those works which had been deemed unworthy to find a place in the Central Museum." And he adds with due modesty, this worthy professor, that if it were not for the fear of being thought indiscreet he would plead also for plaster casts of the Apollo and the Laocoon. Since those days the fortunes of Montpellier have undergone a magical change. The city that would once have been content with the refuse of the Louvre now possesses a series of works very many of which the Louvre itself might be proud to entertain. By an extraordinary stroke of good luck, the several acquisitions made since the year 1825 have combined to form a connected record of nearly all the great epochs of art and of nearly every illustrious school of painting; and this result has been brought about, as I have said, not by the liberality of the State, or by any exceptional enterprise on the part of the citizens of Montpellier, but by the unexampled generosity of private individuals, who have chosen thus honourably to connect their names with the history of their native town.

The name inscribed over the door of the gallery serves to keep fresh the memory of its earliest benefactor. François Fabre, who may, in fact, be regarded as the founder of the Museum as well as of the

School of Art, and the Public Library, was a notable figure in the social and artistic life of the beginning of the century. He was himself a painter, and as the pupil of David he had caught something of the cold and uninspired classicism of his master's style. One of his works finds a place in the catalogue of the Louvre, and there are several important examples in the Museum of Montpellier. But his reputation rests rather on qualities of taste and connoisseurship than on actual achievements in art. During a long residence in Italy, where he formed the bulk of his collection, he was recognised as a learned authority on all matters pertaining to the history of Italian painting, and on one occasion the Ecole de Beaux Arts formally submitted to his judgment a question as to the originality of a disputed portrait by Raphael. At Florence, Fabre enjoyed the friendship of Alfieri and of Alfieri's mistress, the celebrated Duchess of Albany, wife of the English Pretender. After the poet's death the French painter succeeded to the vacant place in the affections of this accomplished lady, and thus it happens that the valuable libraries of Alfieri and the Duchess are now among the municipal possessions of Montpellier.

The greater part of the Fabre collection was made over to the town during his lifetime. It consists altogether of more than 300 pictures, besides bronzes, marbles, and drawings, and the valuable library just mentioned, to which was added a large

number of books specially relating to the history of art, and accumulated by the painter himself. The most interesting among the works in painting belong to the Italian schools, and it is an odd coincidence that one whose judgment on Raphael was regarded as final and indisputable should have included in his own collection two portraits by the master neither of which has been accepted without question by the criticism of a later time. Passavant sees in the head of Lorenzo de' Medici a copy by some pupil of the lost original described by Vasari; nor are the intrinsic merits of the painting such as to warrant a different conclusion. The portrait of a young man with long fair hair stands in a very different category. By whomsoever painted, it is beyond question a superb and noble piece of work, executed by the hand of a master. It has been attributed to Giorgione, to Sebastian del Piombo, and to Francia, and in sentiment and manner it does undoubtedly suggest Francia rather than Raphael. But in the presence of a picture so beautiful, marked by that sweetness and dignity of style which belongs only to the portraiture of Italy, and to the practice of men in whom the study of individual character was constantly sustained by the pursuit of ideal beauty in design, the question of authorship is, after all, of no great consequence. The painting is not unworthy of Raphael even though it be by Francia, and the director of the Museum perhaps does wisely to

retain the greater name, and thus insure for an undoubted masterpiece its due meed of admiration. On the opposite wall hangs another of the gems of the Fabre collection, "The Marriage of St. Catherine," by Paul Veronese, a work of exquisite colour, and exhibiting a rare degree of precision and completeness in the painting of details. M. Clement de Ris finds fault with the design, but a critic who would demand from Venice the severe graces of Florentine style is not in the mood to appreciate the triumphs of a painter like Veronese. The painting that lives by the splendour and glow of its colouring is not to be dissected but to be enjoyed, and certainly there are few pictures by the artist that have on this ground a better right to claim immunity from pedantic criticism. The colour throughout is of measured strength and perfect harmony, enriched by deep tints of crimson, and gold, and blue, and refined by passages of silvery quality made up of the most delicate opalescent hues, that are cool, and yet never cold, in effect. These are two picked and chosen examples from the Fabre collection, but they are very far from exhausting its resources. Italian painting in the earlier as in the later phases of its development is illustrated with even greater fulness; and where the Fabre Gallery fails more recent donations have come to fill the blank. I may notice in particular a very beautiful panel ascribed to Bellini, only lately presented to the Gallery by M. Chaber. It is slightly

embrowned by varnish, but is otherwise intact, and if not the work of Giovanni Bellini himself is at least a genuine and characteristic product of the early Venetian school. In "The Holy Family" by Fra Bartolommeo and in two portrait heads by Titian and Tintoret we come back to the gift of M. Fabre, to whose generosity is also due a curious panel ascribed to Daniele da Volterra, and a very interesting series of landscapes by Gaspar Poussin.

After what has been said it will seem almost like exaggeration to say that the Fabre collection forms by no means the most valuable portion of the Museum, and yet the statement is strictly accurate. In the year 1837 M. Valedau, another citizen of Montpellier, bequeathed to his native town a series of works by the great Dutch and Flemish masters, among which it would be hard to find a single bad or indifferent picture. Twenty years ago the money value of this collection was estimated at £16,000 sterling, and at the present time it would probably be worth nearly double that sum. M. Valedau would seem to have possessed a highly cultivated taste for the works of those masters whom he specially loved. At a time when the principles of a pedantic classicism were in the ascendent, and before the Romantic movement in French art had as yet gathered strength, he showed an unerring instinct for the qualities of the genre painters of Holland. It would perhaps be too much to say that every work admitted to his collection is a

masterpiece, but it is at least true that they are nearly all admirable and genuine examples of the masters to whom they are assigned, and they preserve a freshness and purity of condition that is rare even in the contents of public and national galleries. A student of the Museum of Montpellier, even without access to other and more celebrated collections, would still be able to form a just appreciation of the aims and the triumphs of the Dutch School. Terburg, the younger Teniers, Cuyt, Metzu, Jan Steen, Adrian van Ostade, Ruysdael, Mieris, and Wouvermans are all illustrated by works of characteristic force and refinement. It would serve no purpose to attempt a lengthened description of these pictures. Each one of the masters I have named has his own special and well-defined manner of interpreting nature. It was not within the scope of Dutch art to affect a large or epical treatment of human life. The truth and beauty of such work resides in homely material and is expressed by simple means. It does not strive to present noble types of character or to combine the truths of poetic imagination with the rhythmic grace of ordered and severe design. And yet, despite the lack of these loftier qualities of invention and style, Dutch painting has such a perfection of its own, so much finesse in perception, and such an exquisite technical mastery, that we lose all sense of the limitation of its aim. The genius of art is so large and tolerant

that it can find room for every ideal held with conviction and worthily pursued. And it is astonishing even in the modest range of an art that deals only with simple life how varied is the exercise of individual power. Here, for instance, in two pictures by Jan Steen we get that subtle sub-flavour of drama which always distinguishes his treatment of contemporary manners. In one of them a traveller has sat down to refresh himself at the door of a country inn, and in the interchange of glances between the customer and his hostess we get just that suggestion of the dramatic possibilities of the scene which serves to animate and enliven the masterly rendering of detail. Terburg again leaves his mark on every subject that he handles by a largeness and sureness of touch that serves to convert a miniature into a masterpiece; and his peculiar method could scarcely be shown to better advantage than in the figure of the half-drunken soldier who slumbers with his head resting on the table while the waiting-maid pours out another glass of wine. Another gem of the collection is the little picture of a man writing at a table, by Metz, and in the same category may be placed a view on the banks of the Meuse by Cuyp, a work of delicately executed detail suffused in golden sunlight. I may add that the town has recently enriched the representation of Dutch art by the purchase of a superb head by Nicholas Maas from the San Donato Palace.

A special feature of the Valedau bequest, apart

from the series of paintings already mentioned, consists of a very remarkable collection of the works of Greuze. Nowhere else, not even at the Louvre, is the talent of this master displayed with such fulness and variety. A visit to Montpellier induces a more liberal estimate of Greuze's powers than has gained general acceptance through the more familiar products of his pencil. The painter of pretty faces in which an enfeebled sentiment too often takes the place of passion is here seen to have a wider range, and to be capable on occasion of executing work of greater vigour and force. There are altogether twelve canvases bearing his name, and with perhaps a single exception they are all of unquestioned authenticity. Most of them, as I have said, are in the gift of M. Valedau, but there are one or two of the number formerly belonging to the collection of M. Louis Bruyas, another enlightened citizen of Montpellier, to whose generosity the Museum has been scarcely less indebted. As M. Fabre's donation of the works of the Italian masters was worthily seconded by the Valedau bequest of representative examples of Dutch art, so both these collections are now appropriately supplemented by the series of French paintings given by M. Bruyas. M. Bruyas had his heart in the Romantic movement, and the museum is consequently richly endowed with the paintings of men like Courbet, Corot, Barye, Tassaert, Diaz, Gericault, Delacroix, Isabey, and Rousseau. Never,

surely, was a town so fortunate in its patrons; each one possessing a distinct individual taste, and all animated by a genuine love for art and a common desire to promote the dignity of their native city. M. Bruyas was the personal friend of many of the artists whose talent he sought to appreciate, and on the walls of the Museum are to be found a number of different portraits of him executed by various hands. These works in themselves form the material for a comparative study of style. There is nothing which so clearly exhibits the meaning of individuality in art as the contrasted results of different studies of the same subject. It is interesting, for example, to compare the heads painted by Delacroix and Ricard and then to pass from either to the more modern and more strongly realistic work of a painter like Courbet.

## X.—MARSEILLES.

A traveller landing at Marseilles, if by any stretch of imagination he could be supposed to be ignorant of the existence of Paris, might readily fancy himself in the capital of France. There is no city in the provinces which has less of a provincial air. With a population falling far below that of Lyons, it nevertheless approaches much more nearly to the character and aspect of a metropolis, and perhaps in no way is the splendour and dignity of this great seaport of the Republic more clearly marked

than in the imposing and really magnificent building now appropriated to the uses of the Museum. The Palais de Longchamp is altogether a fortunate example of the resources of modern French architecture. It is planned with that mixture of science and audacity which is so eminently characteristic of the national temperament in matters of art. The superior science and training of a French artist often avail to save him from the reproach of vulgarity even when he is deliberately striving for effect. He finds a way to impress the popular imagination without resort to the common devices of overloaded ornament or ostentatious display of expensive material, and though he may not be inspired by the highest ideal of beauty, he can nevertheless win the respect and attention of serious students by a certain daring and boldness of design. The late M. Henri Esperandieu, the architect of the Palais de Longchamp, was no doubt greatly assisted in his labours by the natural advantages of a magnificent site. The building stands upon an elevated position commanding the principal streets of the city, which run down to the margin of the old harbour. It would have been difficult, one may say, to have failed altogether in producing a monument of imposing effect, but it would have been easy nevertheless to have missed the very striking success which the artist has achieved. The question of cost must also be taken into account in judging of a work of this kind. The

Marseillais have not been grudging in this matter, and yet, considering what they have got for their money, the sum expended upon the building and its adornment cannot be deemed extravagant. Apart from the value of the site the Museum has cost the city, in round figures, £165,000, and for this sum it has become possessed of a building admirably adapted to its purpose, with spacious galleries to contain the municipal treasures of art and the extensive collections of natural history. Nor does the outlay merely cover the execution of the architect's design. It includes also the important works of decorative sculpture in the gardens and the mural paintings of the interior, both in their kind of the best which the contemporary school of France can produce. The plan of the building is eminently simple and effective. It consists of two separate wings united by an open colonnade, in the centre of which rises an imposing ornamental structure called the Chateau d'Eau, the source of an abundant fountain of water that falls in a series of cascades to a vast basin in the garden below. The two wings, occupied respectively by the picture gallery and the museum of natural history, are each of two storeys in height, and the colonnade connecting them springs from the upper storey, and thus encircles with the most striking decorative effect the colossal group of sculpture which crowns the summit of the Chateau d'Eau. This group is the work of M. Cavellier, who has also executed the

frieze of Tritons which serves as a background to the cascade. On the pedestals fixed at the entrance to the gardens are four spirited groups of animals by Barye, whose genius in this department has had no rival in modern Europe, and whose death was rightly reckoned among the heaviest losses of the French school. But if the Museum has been fortunate in securing the services of eminent sculptors, its possessions in the way of ornamental paintings are scarcely less remarkable. On the great staircase leading to the picture galleries are placed two beautiful designs by the most original and the most gifted of the living painters of France. M. Puvis de Chavannes is endowed in the highest degree with those nobler qualities of simplicity and style that are too often lacking even to the most brilliant achievements of his fellows. To a command of colour always remarkable for an extraordinary purity and freshness of tone he adds a power of invention which never exaggerates the dramatic significance of a chosen subject, and rarely misses its deeper and more lasting elements of beauty. In no merely superficial sense, therefore, he may be credited with the genius of decorative art; for he can illustrate a theme in simple fashion, too sure of the strength of his design to need recourse to rhetorical artifices of gesture or expression, and with a taste in the selection of harmonious tints that requires no heavy or exaggerated contrasts of light

and shade. In these two paintings he has undertaken to illustrate the history and prosperity of the city. The first represents Marseilles as a Greek colony, with the early settlers at work upon the blocks of marble that are to be employed in the building of the new town, and with a group of graceful women in the foreground relieved against the wide expanse of the Mediterranean. The harmony of colour is of faultless truth and delicacy, the blue sea and the blue sky linked together in a single impression of tone, the heaven above flecked with light clouds, and the water beneath studded with the white sails of passing boats driven onward by a breeze that scarcely ruffles the surface of the sea. In the second design M. Puvis de Chavannes has presented the city in its modern character as the great seaport of Eastern commerce. The traveller at Marseilles learns to appreciate the strength of the national feeling about Egypt. There are manifold signs of the country's intimate relations with Oriental life and civilisation, and it is this aspect of Marseilles which the painter has sought to illustrate in his design. On the deck of a ship steering slowly into the harbour figures in Eastern costume are effectively intermingled with Europeans, while beyond the outline of the vessel rises the white buildings of the modern town. These two impressive and admirable paintings stand alone in the Museum of Painting and Sculpture, but the galleries allotted to the use of the natural history

collections are richly adorned with a series of decorative designs illustrating the wonders of the world's landscape and the marvellous products of the animal and vegetable kingdom. These are the work of M. Ponson and M. Durangel.

Such is the building wherein the Museum of Marseilles has at last found a permanent home. It was begun in the year 1862, and finished in the month of August, 1869, when it was opened to the public with all due pomp and ceremony. The earlier history of the artistic institutions of the city is the record of a long and persistent struggle against untoward circumstances. The first step towards the creation of any administrative machinery for the care of art was taken in response to a general circular issued by the Minister Roland in regard to the confiscated property of exiled Frenchmen. This was in 1792; but despite the impatience of the central government it was not until two years later that a commission was appointed at Marseilles charged with the duty of making a regular inventory of the artistic resources of the district. The Commission commenced its sittings in the Convent of St. Bernard, where most of the objects of art were collected, and which retained its association with the Museum from that time until nearly 70 years later, when the building I have just described was completed. At first the functions of the Commission were imperfectly defined, and its powers were constantly threatened. Little by little, however,

it assumed a position of permanent authority, taking under its charge the guardianship of the art treasures of the department and making itself responsible for a course of public instruction in art and in science. But its earnest and self-sacrificing members endured many anxieties before their labours were officially recognised. There were no funds either to defray the necessary expenses connected with the maintenance of the building or to pay the salaries of the officials, and it was not till the year 1799 that the Museum received a regular status as a public institution. Even then its newly acquired dignity lasted but a little while. In 1802 the Government appropriated the Convent for the purposes of a newly established college, and the Museum for a time disappeared altogether. In 1804 an attempt was made to revive its shattered fortunes, and finally the chapel adjoining the convent was accepted as a suitable habitation for the picture gallery and the school of art. At that date Marseilles was divided into three distinct municipalities, and the Museum belonged not to the town but to the department; but when in 1805 the triple mayoralty was abolished, the art institutions, which had hitherto been controlled by the Prefect, passed under the jurisdiction of the city. Henceforward an annual budget was voted from the city funds in support of the cause of art, and in 1843 the last step was taken in the gradual development of the artistic institutions of Marseilles by a decree in

virtue of which the Museum and the school were placed under distinct and separate systems of control. The present relation of the Museum to the municipality is much the same as that which prevails in many other large towns. The two principal representatives of authority, here as elsewhere, are the Permanent Director of the Gallery on the one side, and the Mayor as the mouthpiece of the Corporation on the other. Sometimes, as we have seen in the case of Bordeaux, the Mayor delegates certain functions of his office to an "adjoint," who is entrusted with specific duties in regard to the interests of art; but this is not the course adopted in Marseilles, where the place of the "adjoint" is supplied by a consulting committee composed of gentlemen of position in the town whose interest in art is generally known and acknowledged. This committee is not endowed with independent authority and has no power to enforce its decisions. It can only deliberate and advise, but in practice its recommendations are found to have weight and effect, for the reason, doubtless, that the Mayor is glad to be relieved of the entire responsibility of determining questions that demand special knowledge and study. Thus the Committee is always consulted as to the purchase of works of art in regard to which the Director of the Gallery has no vote. It may be taken as evidence of the usefulness of such a committee that an effort is now being made to apply the same machinery to the reorganisation of

the School of Art. How far this will be rendered unnecessary by the intervention of the State it would be difficult to conjecture. The Department of Fine Arts in Paris has begun to bestir itself in regard to the periodical inspection of the schools of the provinces, and it is possible that the movement may ultimately extend to the provincial museums. Two years ago M. Henri Houssaye, writing in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, urgently pressed upon the Government the need of action in the matter, and as all these provincial museums directly benefit by annual gifts made on behalf of the State there would be an obvious justification for such intervention where it should prove to be necessary. In a city like Marseilles possessed of a full sense of its own importance and of the modern requirements of art, the effect upon the Museum could not be very great, but the organisation of the schools is a different question; and here the control of the central authority would seem to offer greater advantages. In our own country, where the schools of art are in communication with South Kensington, such a system of national control already exists, and when the efforts now being made to establish municipal museums throughout England have taken shape the result will nearly approach the ideal at which the reforming spirits in France are now aiming. If the standard of education in the schools is jealously maintained, which perhaps can only be done by a certain measure of official control,

the generation which grows up under their influence may be trusted to provide for the students and for the public an adequate machinery for the constitution of the local museum.

Coming to Marseilles immediately after Montpellier, the contents of the Museum do not strike the visitor as being specially remarkable. Though sharing with other towns in the original distribution of works of art made at the beginning of the century, Marseilles possesses few important examples of the great Italian painters, nor have its resources been greatly enriched by private munificence. In the lower galleries are placed two interesting designs of the Florentine school of the fifteenth century lately received from the Louvre, and in the centre of the larger room on the first floor hangs one of the most beautiful of the many paintings of Perugino which are scattered over the collections of provincial France. It has suffered at the hands of unskilful restorers, who, however, in this case have so clearly left the traces of their bungling handiwork that it is possible to distinguish the repainting from the original. A clumsy restorer is perhaps on the whole to be preferred to an expert, for the latter is apt to reduce the whole of the picture upon which he is employed to the level of his own incompetence, while the former is not sensitive enough to be hurt by the contrast of old and new, and is therefore content to leave much of the surface untouched. Though the subject of the

picture is the Holy Family, the treatment is striking and original. The Virgin, seated upon a throne in the centre of the composition, holds the infant Christ in her arms, while behind her and on a higher throne is the figure of St. Anne. On one side of the principal group stands the father of the Virgin, with one of the Maries holding in her arms the infant form of St. James her son; on the other are St. Joseph and the second Mary with the little St. James the Less; while on the steps of the throne are seated St. John the Evangelist and Joseph of Arimathea. The union of these three groups is contrived with exquisite grace, and the simplicity of the material out of which such a noble and impressive picture has been composed may be taken as typical of the aims and methods of painting, of its triumphs and its resources, at a time when the artist was deeply penetrated with the beauty of a single idea. There is no dramatic motive to impress the spectator or to give an impulse to the artist's design, no momentary touch of sentiment to give intensity of effect. The beauty of the result is dependent upon the profound study of one enduring human relation—the relation of mother and child. For although Perugino laboured in the service of religion, art even in his hands had already passed beyond the mere expression of devotional fervour, and had reached through a long and persistent study of a holy theme to a deeper foundation in common nature. Another

interesting specimen of Italian art is the little portrait of a Venetian Princess by Paul Veronese, a work which, in the freshness and vigour of its handling and in its direct rendering of character, almost suggests the manner of Velasquez. No name is assigned to a superb study of a Jew's head executed with a searching precision of design almost worthy of Durer. It was once attributed to Moretto, but in the careful and elaborate execution of every detail, and in the finely modelled surface of the flesh, one may rather detect the hand of a Flemish master. A spirited portrait recalling the features of Moliere by some unknown artist of the French school, and a finely painted head ascribed to Holbein are among the remaining works in the gallery calling for special remark. One large room in the Museum is entirely devoted to the paintings of Provençal artists, and here are to be found interesting examples of Pierre Puget, who combined the practice of painting and sculpture, and who died at Marseilles in the year 1694. A modern Marseillais of distinction only poorly represented in the gallery is Gustave Ricard, whose portraits have a curious beauty and fascination.

## XI.—LYONS.

The artistic institutions of Lyons are more complex and varied than those of any other of the great provincial cities. In point of administrative

method and system it may be said to offer an epitome of the several distinct schemes of organisation which are separately exhibited in towns of smaller size and inferior importance; and it possesses besides certain individual characteristics of its own that are well deserving of study and consideration. The occasional intervention of the State, which has already been remarked in the case of Limoges, is illustrated in the constitution of the Lyons School of Art. The great industry of the town, demanding as it does the active support of artistic invention and taste, has served to give a special direction to the course of study pursued in the school. But Lyons is not wholly absorbed by its manufactures, nor are its efforts limited to the education of a race of expert designers. In the organisation of the school by the Government, as in the arrangement of the municipal museums, the claims of art are interpreted in a larger and more liberal spirit. It is treated not merely as a necessary factor in the prosperity of the city, but as a source of general culture and refinement; and the success with which its higher forms of expression are studied is witnessed by the fact that Lyons is almost the only provincial centre which possesses a distinct school of native painters. I had an opportunity during my stay of examining the drawings and works in colour as well as the sculptured models executed by the pupils for the annual competition. The excellence of individual examples was perhaps less

striking than the high average standard of proficiency which marked the exhibition as a whole. This, after all, is the true test of the existence of an intelligent system of instruction. No professors, however earnest they may be, can command the presence of exceptional talent, but they can always impose a sound method of work, and if their teaching be well directed, it must surely result in the creation of a body of skilful and capable workmen. It would be difficult to insist too strongly or too often upon the important place assigned in French art schools to the practice of modelling, or upon the immeasurable superiority of the work produced in this kind to anything of which our own schools can boast. The study of sculpture is the surest safeguard against imperfect science and clumsy craftsmanship, and its recognised place in the scheme of instruction implies a degree of thoroughness which can scarcely be insured by any other means. The clay models of ornament and of figures in the round were certainly among the most remarkable performances of the art students of Lyons, and next in interest are to be reckoned the original designs which had been executed with special reference to the manufacture of silk brocade.

Apart from what is done in the School of Art, which is a national institution, organised and controlled by the central Government, Lyons has found a means of its own of maintaining the artistic cha-

racter of its manufactures. It has established a museum specially devoted to the interests of industrial art, and containing a rich collection of woven fabrics, both ancient and modern. This is not to be confused with the Municipal Museum of the town, of the contents of which I shall have occasion to speak later on. The Musée d'Art et d'Industrie is, in fact, not a municipal institution at all. It was founded in 1864 by the Lyons Chamber of Commerce, and it is now installed in galleries occupying the upper storey of the building appropriated to the uses of the Bourse. It thus holds a unique position among the artistic establishments of Provincial France, and its existence proves on the part of the Lyons merchants and manufacturers a rare degree of enterprise and intelligence. The desire to give a higher artistic character to the processes and products of manufacture more often takes the form of a protest from without than of a spontaneous movement from within, and in our own country it is still too much the fashion to rely upon foreign invention for our designs, and thus practically to abandon altogether the effort to produce a race of native designers. This, at least, was the case until within recent years. So much so, indeed, that the successful endeavour on the part of Mr. Morris to depart from established custom, and to introduce an original spirit into the industry with which he was specially associated, has already produced something like a

revolution in taste and style. Much, however, still remains to be done in other branches of manufacture, and the success achieved by the Chamber of Commerce at Lyons may still in many ways serve as a useful example to ourselves. As might be expected from the particular condition under which it has been established, the Museum of Art and Industry at Lyons exhibits a practical spirit in all the details of its organisation and management. The special purpose of the Institution governs the choice and arrangement of the different objects collected for exhibition, and while the contents of the several rooms are sufficiently interesting to the public, they are even more obviously suited to the purposes of study. For the support and development of the Museum the Chamber of Commerce votes annually a sum of 30,000 francs, and this display of public spirit has already met with response from private individuals in the shape of donations both in money and in kind. The director of the Museum acts under the control of a permanent committee formed partly of members of the Chamber of Commerce and partly of known amateurs of the city, who have shown a special interest in the history and progress of decorative art. A principal feature of the establishment is a large library stocked with art books of reference, which are constantly used by the designers employed in the different factories. Next to the library is a large gallery furnished

with drawings of ornament and decoration by the old masters. Many of these drawings are originals belonging to the Museum, others are photographs from examples in the different collections of Europe, and in an adjoining gallery the same idea of presenting an historical survey of the principles of ornamental art is further illustrated by means of a valuable series of engravings. The third gallery contains specimens of the raw material, and in the fourth gallery are arranged model looms of various sorts, together with large working drawings of patterns for silk brocades. The contents of these several apartments serve to give a full measure of interest to the extensive collection of fabrics of all ages and countries, which occupies the central saloon. Considering the comparatively short time during which the Museum has been in existence, this collection is already wonderfully comprehensive.

Besides the Musée d'Art et d'Industrie, Lyons possesses the usual collections of works of art belonging to the municipality. These are divided into three distinct sections, all of which, however, are arranged in the spacious galleries of the Palais des Arts, where they are placed under the control of a single director. This last point deserves notice, for it marks a more logical and coherent system of organisation than is to be found elsewhere. In the other towns I have described the institutions of art are split up into several separate establishments, each with its

own building and its own director. The disadvantages of such a system are obvious. It is inconvenient to the public, and therefore tends inevitably to the neglect of all but the most popular forms of art. Everywhere it is the picture gallery which most powerfully attracts the curiosity and admiration of the citizens, and in most cases the museum of antiquities and the museum of decorative art are almost deserted, and this neglect on the part of the public encourages and excuses a corresponding neglect on the part of the authorities. Many of these smaller museums are ill-kept and indifferently cared for. Funds do not always suffice for the appointment of a highly qualified director, and without this indispensable condition of success no great development of the collection can be expected. Lyons has therefore done wisely in grouping the different museums under one head. The director of the museums is responsible to the town not merely for the care of the paintings and sculpture; he has also under his charge the Musée des Antiques, which contains a series of Gallo-Roman remains of the highest interest, besides valuable examples of ancient jewellery, bronzes, and pottery, and the Musée du Moyen Age et de la Renaissance, which is particularly rich in armour, faience, and furniture. Of course each one of these separate sections has its own curator, to whom the practical conduct of the department is entrusted, and who has full scope for the display of energy and enter-

prise. It is, for example, largely owing to the intelligent enthusiasm of M. Giraud, the curator of the collections illustrating the art of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, that this particular branch of the Lyons Museum has assumed a position of such importance.

A special feature of the picture gallery is the separate collection of works by native painters of Lyons, which are hung in a room by themselves. Among living artists of note whose birth connects them with the city are Vollon, Flandrin, and Puvis de Chavannes, all of whom are represented by important and characteristic works. In the larger gallery, devoted to the great schools of Europe, the series of Italian pictures claims the first attention. If the Ascension of Jesus Christ were in a perfect state of preservation it would undoubtedly rank among the most perfect of Perugino's inventions, and although much re-painted the original beauty of the design remains to attest the nobility of the artist's conception. Christ, poised in mid-air and surrounded by angels, mounts towards heaven in the presence of the Virgin and the Apostles. The action of several of the figures is more energetic than is usual with Perugino, but the sentiment of the faces reveals the accustomed sweetness and delicacy of expression. The picture was painted in the year 1495, and is thus described by Vasari, a writer who, from his strong preference for the party of Michael Angelo, was cer-

tainly not disposed to overrate Perugino's merits:—"And in the church of St. Peter, the abbey of the Black Friars at Perugia, he painted over the high altar, upon a large panel, the subject of the Ascension, with the Apostles gazing into the sky. On the predella of this picture are three subjects of sacred history represented with much ability—that is to say, the Adoration of the Magi, the Baptism of Christ, and the Resurrection. This work displays in every detail so much beauty and skill that it is to be reckoned the best of all the pictures which Perugino executed in oil at Perugia." In 1797, in virtue of the provisions of the Treaty of Tolentino, the "Ascension" was transported from Perugia to Paris, where it remained till 1811, when in the second distribution of works of art among the cities of the provinces it found its way to Lyons. But it would have been restored to Italy in 1815, when the Allies insisted upon the return of nearly all the artistic treasure acquired by the victories of Napoleon, if it had not been that Pope Pius VII. made a special exception in favour of Lyons, and allowed Perugino's masterpiece to remain as a permanent possession of the town.

On the same wall hangs a beautiful example of the art of Veronese, which has fortunately almost completely escaped the cruel attentions of the restorer. The subject is Bathsheba at the bath surprised by King David, and the treatment exhibits all the painter's facile grace of composition

and exquisite charm of colour. The blue robe thrown over the nude form of Bathsheba and the rich red tones of the King's raiment make a brilliant harmony admirably relieved against the sober background of a palace garden, with dark cypress trees. Two other works ascribed to Veronese were perhaps at one time genuine and beautiful expressions of his art, but they have not been so tenderly handled. The treatment of the pictures at Lyons does not, indeed, bear high testimony to the discretion of the Directors. Many of them have been ruthlessly cleaned and others badly repainted. It does seem desirable, certainly, that the State, having enriched the provincial museums with their most valued examples of ancient art, should retain some sort of authority in regard to the mode of their preservation. It is monstrous that the world should be deprived of the beauty of pictures that cannot be replaced to satisfy the caprice of a local director, and it is high time that rules should be laid down by the Government to protect the great masters of the past from unconsidered and unskilful restoration. ]

## XII.—DIJON AND NANCY.

The artistic institutions of Dijon are among the earliest establishments of the kind in provincial France. Its school which, like those of Lyons and Limoges is now placed under the control of the

State, was founded in 1765 by the efforts of one François Devosge, who, although he was hindered through loss of sight from pursuing the career of a sculptor, retained to the close of his life an undiminished enthusiasm for the cause of art. Successfully did he labour for the advancement of the town that in 1770 he induced the Government of the Department to provide the necessary funds for the creation of a travelling studentship. At this time Dijon stood alone among the cities of the provinces in offering to its students the coveted reward of a sojourn in Rome, and in the list of those who profited by the energy and public spirit of Devosge stands the name of Pierre Prud'hon, one of the most gifted and fascinating artists of the French school. Dijon may well be proud of having recognised Prud'hon's talent and fostered its development. During his stay at Rome the young painter executed for the town the painted ceiling which now adorns the sculpture gallery of the Museum; and although the design was avowedly taken from Pietro di Cortona's work in the Barberini Palace it is treated with sufficient freedom to permit the exercise of a marked originality of style.

The Museum itself was not organised till after the Revolution, when it was installed in the apartments of the ancient Palace of the Dukes of Burgundy. Though it was included in the original list of cities deemed worthy to share in the national treasures of art, Dijon was somewhat unfortunate in the quality

of the pictures which she secured from the State. There is nothing in the gallery to compare with the two Mantegnas of Tours, or with the Peruginos of Bordeaux or Lyons. Indeed, it must be allowed that the representation of the nobler phases of the art of the past is singularly weak and uninteresting, and this in spite of the many dignified names inscribed in the catalogue. In the new catalogue now in course of preparation it would be very desirable that these ambitious attributions should be carefully revised, for it is surely better in an establishment which assumes both to instruct and to please that the roll of masterpieces should be curtailed than that the name and fame of great masters should be brought into contempt. And if this process of revision is carried out with due courage Dijon, I fear, will have to part with a Mantegna, two Paul Veroneses, and a Perugino, besides a number of works by inferior men. A Virgin and Child bearing the name of Luini, but so injured as to render any decision extremely difficult, an admirable sketch of the assumption of the Virgin, by Tintoret, a work of indisputable authenticity, and a large composition of Adam and Eve, by Guido, will then remain as almost the only Italian paintings of interest or importance. Such at least would have been the case a year ago, but the valuable collection which the Museum has recently acquired adds greatly to its wealth in nearly every department. The circumstances under which the

Trimolet bequest was made over to Dijon are scarcely less remarkable than the collection itself. M. Trimolet, who died in the year 1866, was an extremely rich amateur, whose whole life had been spent in accumulating objects of art and curiosity. These were carefully preserved in an old house at Lyons, M. Trimolet's native town, and to the Museum of Lyons it was supposed they were ultimately to find their way. Such indeed was the owner's intention, but it so happened that shortly before his death M. Trimolet had a slight difference with the municipal authorities. His house had a certain architectural character of its own, which he was anxious to preserve, and he therefore begged the authorities to exempt him from an order calling upon him to whitewash the exterior of the building. Bumbledom, however, chose to stand upon its rights, M. Trimolet's prayer was refused, and the result was that when, in 1866, he came to die, his last injunctions to Madame Trimolet were to leave nothing to the town of Lyons. And Madame Trimolet faithfully observed her husband's wishes. The old house in Lyons was shut up, all the cases being carefully sealed. The widow left Lyons, and took up her abode in the department of the Saone et Loire, and shortly before her death summoned the notary of the neighbouring country town, and made Dijon the fortunate inheritor of the treasure which the municipality of Lyons had sacrificed for a little piece of red tape.

The Trimolet collection now forms a distinct feature in the Dijon Museum. It is admirably arranged in a suite of five apartments, to which the various objects of art serve as appropriate and luxurious furniture. In this way it is made to retain much of the charm and fascination that belong to the cabinet of an amateur. The visitor becomes intimate not merely with the collection but with the collector, and is able to appreciate in a manner that a more formal and scientific method of arrangement would not allow the experience of a lifetime devoted to the accumulation of works of art. On the walls of these galleries fine pictures mingle with superb specimens of majolica or with chosen examples of ancient armour; while around the sides of the apartment are ranged noble pieces of French and Italian furniture of the Renaissance, interspersed with cases containing jewellery, enamels, and carvings in wood and ivory. Many of the pictures far surpass in interest and value the older possessions of the Museum. I may notice in particular a very delightful Holy Family by Fra Bartolommeo, like a Raphael in the tranquillity and sweetness of its sentiment, but bearing nevertheless the impress of its author's individuality. An Ascension of the Virgin Mary, by Gaudenzio Ferrari, and a Virgin and Child, by Bellini, are also among the treasures of good things of the collection, although it is to be said in regard to both that they are at present hung too high to admit of close and careful inspec-

tion. The same remark applies to an early Florentine painting, and to a Virgin and Child ascribed to Leonardo, which although it may be more correctly given to one of the followers of the master, is interesting, as embodying a composition for which a design exists in the British Museum. The collection includes several original drawings of value, but the most interesting examples of this kind belonging to the Museum are to be found in the gift of M. His de la Salle, and are displayed in a separate apartment. The gem of this series, so far at least as the Italian schools are concerned, is a lovely landscape study, by Titian, executed, as it would seem, in the master's later time, and marked by that suggestive freedom of execution which distinguishes the great Venetian as the originator of the modern sentiment for the beauties of outward nature. A single example set down to the name of Mantegna is, perhaps, scarcely worthy of so profound a genius in design. The collection exhibits greater strength in the art of those who took their inspiration from Raphael, and is indeed uncommonly rich in ornamental drawings by Perino del Vaga and Giulio Romano. Among the French drawings may be noticed a superb head by Dumoustier, and vigorous studies by Fragonard, Watteau, and Poussin, and in the record of the Dutch school a special note of admiration is due to the life-size head of a child by Nicholas Maas. While on the subject of drawings, I must not

omit to mention that Professor Legros, though he is permanently settled in England, has not forgotten or neglected the museum of his native town, to which he has presented several of his powerful studies and etchings, besides an important work in oil. Nor must I quit the collection at Dijon without mention of two noble works of sculpture of the 15th century, the monumental tombs of Philippe-Hardi and of Jean-sans-Peur, both of which, however, are too well known by all visitors to Dijon to need criticism or description.

Nancy, like Dijon, has lately been enriched by a munificent bequest. Thanks to the generosity of Madame Poirel, upwards of a hundred additional titles will shortly be inscribed in the catalogue. When I was at Nancy this newly acquired treasure was still in process of arrangement, and it was, therefore, difficult to judge of its worth as a whole. I noticed, however, a superb male portrait by Pordenone, a powerful head by Rembrandt, and a very interesting composition of the Holy Family by Granacci. There were, besides, genuine specimens of Salvator Rosa, Rosa di Tivoli, and the less eminent masters of the northern schools. One of the most remarkable pictures in the older portion of the Nancy Museum is a vigorous sketch by Tintoret for a composition of the entombment. Tintoret's works outside of Venice are so rare that a study such as this possesses uncommon interest, for it conveys a just sense of the passion and power of the painter's

invention, and it allows us at the same time to note the extraordinary simplicity of his technical method. A sketch is in this way sometimes more instructive than a finished picture. It also stands a better chance of escaping from the hands of the restorer, being deemed of insufficient importance to deserve his fatal care. The picture that has suffered most in this respect is the beautiful Perugino of the Infant Christ with the Virgin kneeling by his side. Happily, however, the expression of the faces is still intact, and is of exquisite tenderness and beauty. There are few works of the master which show more clearly the source of Raphael's inspiration and the amount of the debt that he owed to Perugino. Nancy possesses some valuable specimens of Dutch and Flemish art, some of them by painters whose names are rarely encountered elsewhere. To this class belongs the "Money Changers driven from the Temple," by Jean van Hemesen, an artist of whom we know little beyond the fact that he lived and worked at Haarlem about the middle of the sixteenth century. Among greater and more famous painters Hobbema and Ruysdael are especially well represented. The two landscapes by the latter are indeed of the most admirable quality, careful and minute in execution, and yet sustained by a singleness and unity of impression which conveys a sense of the spirit as well as the material reality of the scene. In the gallery devoted to the

French School is a brilliant composition by Delacroix of the Battle of Nancy in 1477, besides a classical design by Boucher, and a number of pictures by eminent artists of our own day. In addition to the Museum of Painting, Nancy possesses the Musée Lorrain, installed in the ducal palace, where there is an extensive historical collection of various objects of art, as well as a series of Gallo-Roman remains.

### XIII.—LILLE.

In one respect at least the Museum of Lille is beyond the reach of rivalry. The magnificent collection of drawings by the old masters bequeathed to the city in 1834 by the Chevalier Wicar constitutes a possession of extraordinary interest, such as even the national museums of the Continent would be glad to claim. It is by a rare piece of good fortune that a provincial town is able to offer to its citizens these precious records of the great art of the past, and it is scarcely possible that in the excellence and variety of its contents the Museum at Lille could now be equalled, with whatever energy and resource the enterprise should be undertaken. Drawings by Raphael are not too common, and such drawings as belong to the Wicar collection are never likely to come into the market again. And yet though the task of bringing together a worthy display of old drawings would be sufficiently

difficult, the directors of a newly established museum might do wisely to give special attention to this particular phase of art. Nor in England at any rate would they have to despair of success. There are several rich collectors in this country who, if they were so minded, might very nobly endow a museum of ancient drawings. And even without private munificence, the task of illustrating the great schools of the past through the medium of original sketches and studies by the great masters would certainly not be so difficult or so hopeless as the attempt to acquire authentic examples of their work in colour. To those who have learnt to care for art at all a sketch by a great hand is scarcely less enjoyable than a finished picture, and it is in certain respects even more suggestive of the artist's peculiar aims and method. Nor is it by any means true, as some folk would have us believe, that such things have only a meaning for professed students, and are as a dead language to the ordinary visitor. The success of the exhibitions held at the Grosvenor Gallery and afterwards at Burlington House finally disposes of this absurd and exclusive prejudice, which has indeed no sort of foundation in reason. Because the superb national collection of drawings has for years been hidden away in the Print Room of the British Museum it by no means follows that the public would not eagerly welcome the proper display of these treasures. On the contrary, it will

often happen, and more especially in regard to the earlier forms of art, that a drawing makes a more direct appeal to the imagination and is more readily appreciated than the more elaborate achievement of the same hand. Such, at least, is the impression which the visitor to the Museum at Lille carries away with him. Take, for example, a genius like Raphael, whose fame in the minds of most persons far outstrips any real knowledge or love of his work. It is possible to be familiar with many of the most celebrated galleries of Europe and yet to remain without any true or heartfelt enthusiasm for his greatness; but it is impossible to preserve this attitude of respectful indifference after an attentive survey of the drawings at Lille. In the presence of 40 or 50 studies, many of them relating to his most famous works, and all of them bearing evidence not merely of his extraordinary powers of invention, but of his close and constant dependence upon nature, the feeling for Raphael's art takes a new touch of intimacy and reality. We are admitted to a closer view of the processes of his invention, and we are able to perceive with how little violence to absolute and literal truth he could stamp his completed conceptions with ideal character and beauty. Such studies, in short, are the true biographies of great artists, telling us more of what we need to know, in order to appreciate their greatness, than all that is left to us in the often meagre and apocryphal records of their daily lives. I have

spoken especially of Raphael, because it is of his life and genius that the Wicar collection affords the fullest testimony. The examples of Michael Angelo are, for the most part, comparatively of little value. But in respect of nearly all the earlier and later phases of Italian painting the Museum has many interesting drawings, including a series of finely-finished designs taken from the sketch-book of an artist unknown to fame, but wherein the genius of Florentine design is very happily illustrated. There are also some admirable studies of German, Flemish, and Dutch art, amongst which I may mention a superb drawing by Durer. The possession of this almost matchless collection has happily inspired the authorities of the Museum to add some valuable examples in the same kind illustrating the more modern phases of art. Nor do the sketches of such men as Millet and Gericault suffer by juxtaposition with the more famous names of the past.

It is not, however, to be assumed that the important place assigned to this particular department has led to the neglect of the picture gallery. With the single exception of Montpellier, there is no city of France more richly furnished than Lille with important and authentic examples of the great schools of painting. In Dutch and Flemish art the Museum is indeed exceptionally rich. There are no less than eight works by Rubens, many of which have been preserved in the city since the date of their execution. They were originally com-

missioned from the painter for the decoration of the monastery of the Capucins, and in regard to the large composition of "The Descent of the Cross," there exists a curious document, showing how Louis XVI. made a determined effort to secure the picture for his own gallery, offering to give some other work of art in exchange. But the monks seem very wisely to have held fast to their possession, and the painting has thus been saved for the Museum at Lille. From the same source proceed also the smaller design of "St. Francis and the Virgin," and the two single figures of Saints, which formerly hung in the entrance to the choir in the chapel attached to the monastery. Rubens' great pupil, Van Dyck, is also well represented at Lille. The large picture of "Christ on the Cross," a very noble specimen of the painter's powers, originally served as an altarpiece in another religious establishment in the city, for which Van Dyck also painted "The Miracle of St. Anthony at Toulouse." An admirable portrait of a lady by the same hand is interesting, as exhibiting an earlier and less familiar phase of the artist's style before he had caught from Rubens a freer and more sumptuous manner of execution. On his way to England Van Dyck visited the studio of Frans Hals, the painter who was destined to give the most extreme illustration to the principles of realistic portraiture. The manner of Van Dyck, even in moments of greatest freedom, must

have seemed pedantic and formal to a painter in whose hands facility of execution sometimes bordered on impertinence. The portrait of Hille Bobbe, the fishwife of Haarlem, which hangs at Lille, shows us Frans Hals in his most audacious mood. The workmanship, though it shows an astounding certainty and resource, is defiant and contemptuous rather than masterly: it leaves the suspicion that the painter has thought rather of the impression upon the spectator than of satisfying his own taste and judgment. Of Frans Hals's more careful and laborious contemporary, Van der Helst, the Museum possesses an interesting example in a somewhat unusual style. The subject is the goddess Venus, and the treatment illustrates the overmastering tendency of the Dutch school towards portraiture and its corresponding inability to embody any ideal conception either of face or form. Something more than mere ambition to emulate the achievements of Italian painting is shown in the works of Zustris, an artist of Amsterdam who journeyed to Italy and studied under Titian. Lille possesses two examples of this rare master, whose style reveals a curious mingling of diverse influences, the individual types and the general mode of composition being obviously derived from Venice, and the colouring at the same time falling far short of the Venetian warmth and richness of tone. Lastly, among works of the Dutch school in its prime may be mentioned two superb portraits of Jan van Raven-

stein, an artist of the details of whose life but little is known, but who enjoyed in his own day a reputation scarcely inferior to that of Frans Hals, or Van der Helst. Of the primitive art of Holland the Museum also possesses several valuable examples, chief amongst which stands "La Fontaine Symbolique" of Thierry Stuerbout, a painter of Haarlem of the first half of the fifteenth century. Early Italian art is not very fully represented, although such works as the Museum can boast in this section are of more than common interest. The "Vierge à l'Eglantine," by Ghirlandajo, is widely known through the engraving published some years ago in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*. In the room in which it forms a central attraction hangs also a Saint Sebastian ascribed to Mantegna, and at least worthy of the master's teaching and influence. This is a recent acquisition obtained since the Museum of Paintings passed from the control of M. Regnart into the hands of its intelligent and zealous director, M. Auguste Herlin, to whom I am indebted for much interesting information concerning the pictures under his care. M. Herlin's stewardship has also witnessed the acquisition of a very interesting "Charity" by Holbein, a repetition of which exists in the museum at Bâle, and a Virgin and Child by Baldovinetti, together with other unnamed but authentic examples of the earlier art of Florence and Siena. The works of the Venetian school include no genuine specimen of the art of Titian,

though both Tintoret and Veronese are worthily represented. The two circular canvases by the last-named artist formerly decorated the Barberigo Palace at Venice, and illustrate his graceful and facile treatment of allegorical subjects. Tintoret contributes a portrait of a monk and the head of an old man, of which a replica is to be found in the gallery of the Pitti Palace.

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